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LUDWIG.

PRINCESS OF CHINA;

A Tragi-Comic Drama, in five Acts.

From the German of SCHILLER;

with considerable alterations and the introduction of
new characters; with the view of its adaptation to
the English Stage.

by

ARCHER THOMPSON GURNEY.

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P R E F A C E.

I have attempted a very free translation, and in part, changed the detail of the following Drama, by the occasional introduction of new Characters, and other material alterations, with the object mentioned in the Title-Page.

For example; conceiving there were not a sufficient number of Characters in the first Act to satisfy the present craving appetite for variety in a London Audience, I have taken the liberty of introducing five young maidens as mourners for a like number of enamoured young Princes, whose gallantry, as will be gathered from the story, had cost them their heads. This innovation is a mere matter of speculation. If it succeed, well and good; if not, one comfort is the young ladies may be put "*hors de combat*," and the Drama remain "*in statu quo*." One of the Characters SKIRINA, has been transformed from a poor old woman living in a miserable hut, to a lady residing in a more agreeable abode; simply because the latter kind of personage appeared to me more suited to the rank in life, held by the wife of the noble Hassan.

The immortal Schiller has drawn his Heroine as a sort of beautiful monster, revelling in, and triumphing over, the life-blood of her numerous lovers, from an unnatural hatred towards the male sex, though he makes her happy at last, by an Union with the *man of her choice*.

In the hope of rendering the lady more interesting to an English Audience, I have taken the further liberty of making her act under the supposed compulsion of a previous inconsiderate oath, of so solemn a nature, that she believes the breach of it, would shut her "*like a Peri out from Heaven*." Hence it was found necessary to introduce the new character of DINARBUS, as a kind of *auxiliary force*, to complete the act of *Rebellion* previously commenced against the plot of an Author, whose name, like that of our own Shakespeare, will live for ever. The best excuse I can set up for such *revolutionary* attempts, is that the German and English Schools so materially differ in Dramatic Composition, that it is next to impossible for a literal translation from either, permanently to succeed.

There are other alterations, which frequently render the work more of a paraphrase than a translation; but I will not trouble the reader with any other apology, than that already stated.

NEUWIED on the Rhine.

THE AUTHOR.

Written in 1835 Ætate 13.

Published in 1836.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

ALTOUM, Emperor of China.

TIMUR, King of Astrachan.

CALAF, Prince of Astrachan.

BARAK, Husband of Skirina.

TARTAGLIA, Vizier.

PANTALON, Chancellor.

TRUFALDIN, Superintendent of the Harem.

BRIGELLA, Chief of the Guard.

DINARBUS, Late Tutor to Turandot.

ISMAEL, Companion of the Prince of Samarcand.

TURANDOT, Princess of China.

ADELMA, a Tartar Princess, her Slave.

ZELIMA, an attendant on Turandot.

SKIRINA, Sister to Zelima.

Doctors of the Divan, Slaves of the Seraglio etc. etc.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

ALTOUN, Emperor of China.
TIMUR, King of Astrachan.
CATAR, Prince of Astrachan.
BARAK, Husband of Skimna.
TABTAHALA, Vizier.
PASTALON, Chamberlain.
TIRKALON, Superintendent of the Harem.
URIGELIA, Head of the Guard.
DANABER, Late Tutor to Turandot.
ISMAIL, Companion of the Prince of Samarcand.
TERANDOT, Princess of China.
ABRAMA, a Tartar Princess, her slave.
XERNA, an attendant on Turandot.
SKIMNA, sister to Xelima.
Doctors of the Divan, slaves of the Sorcerer &c. &c.

TURANDOT,

PRINCESS OF CHINA;

A Tragi - Comic Drama, in five Acts.

ACT I. — SCENE I.

*Suburbs of Peking. The City gate with lofty iron spikes. On the top of many, a human * head is affixed.*

Enter Prince CALAF in Tartar - Garments, from a neighbouring House.

CALAF.

Thanks to the Gods! Peking may boast at least
One generous heart. *(Enter BARAK from the City.)*

BARAK.

Ha! does some airy vision
Deceive my senses? Or do I behold
My young liege-lord, Prince Calaf?

CALAF.

Who art thou?

* NOTE. The heads may either be exhibited to the audience, or merely supposed as seen by the actors to the left of the stage. The English being now, like the Germans, fond of *spectacles*, possibly such an exhibition may suit the taste of the day; but the arrangement of all matters of this nature, is left entirely to the good sense of the manager.

BARAK.

Deign yet more closely to regard your slave.

CALAF.

What! my own faithful Barak!

BARAK.

Even so.

(BARAK kneels, CALAF raises him, and they embrace.)

CALAF.

By mighty Lama, say how camest thou here?

BARAK.

And stand I once again in presence of
My Prince? O bounteous Heaven! I thank thee.
On that dread morn when last I saw your Highness,
And our brave troops, o'erwhelmed by numbers, fell,
Like mellow corn cut by the reaper's hand,
Beneath the usurper's sword; covered with wounds,
And all on foot, I fled to Astrachan;
And deeming you and your illustrious sire
Had fallen in battle, told the faithful few
Who would have joined your standard, all was lost.

CALAF.

Then some were true to their allegiance?

BARAK.

All

Were so in heart: but dastard-fear had seized,
With firm grasp, on the trembling populace.
Though bleeding fast, I hurried to the palace,
Hoping to save my gracious Queen, your mother;
But she had flown, or perished; for I learned
Some roving squadrons of the enemy's horse,
That very morn had entered Astrachan,
And although finally repulsed, had spread
Ruin and death throughout the affrighted city.
So in despair, I left its walls, and roamed
For three long years, from land to land, in vain
Seeking safe shelter for my weary head.

At last I found myself in Peking, where,
Under the name of Hassan, I have wooed,
And won, a Chinese lady for my wife.

CALAF.

To whom you told your name and country?

BARAK.

No;

Still have I kept these secrets to myself.
She only knows me as a Persian exile.
My style of living, it must needs be owned,
Falls short indeed of its accustomed splendour
In our loved native Astrachan; but still,
'Tis well enough, if, haply, it but serve
To entertain the honored Prince, whose death
I mourned, so deeply. But vouchsafe to say
How chanced it that your Highness came to Peking?

CALAF.

When all was lost, save honor, with the King
I sped for Astrachan. — Our gallant steeds,
Fleet as the winds, conveyed us thither, ere
The foe appeared before the city-gates.
We entered privately its lofty walls,
And dashing through its desolate streets, soon reached
The palace, where we found the Queen, my mother,
Amid her hand-maidens, all wo-begone,
Oppressed by deep anxiety and care.

BARAK.

Ah! what a change! but let me not protract
Your melancholy narrative.

CALAF.

Collecting

In haste, a store of gold and precious jewels,
We, with the weeping Queen, soon bade adieu
To the devoted place, and, in disguise,
Towards the desert shaped our course. — Great Gods!
What frightful sufferings we endured! At foot

Of lofty Caucasus, a savage horde
 Of mountain-robbers burst upon our path,
 And cruelly stripped us of our wealth — our *all*,
 Save life alone. Thus lorn, and destitute,
 We struggled long against the bitter pangs
 Of poverty. Language is all too poor
 To paint our wretchedness. — My younger arms
 Alternately supported those to whom
 I owed my being, along the dreary wastes.

BARAK.

O! pious task! would I had shared it with you!

CALAF.

Thus journeying on, it was our chance to reach
 A Tartar-town, where, in a mosque, I left
 My hapless parents, to obtain them food.
 But lo, a new misfortune! Rumour soon
 Informed me that the mighty Khan of Teflis,
 Usurper of my father's throne, suspecting
 Some members of our royal house might still
 Exist, had sent his emissaries forth
 In search of them, to many a distant state,
 Who narrowly watched each road and mountain-pass.
 Nought but immediate flight preserved us. Ah!
 What state so wretched and forlorn, as that
 Of fallen royalty?

BARAK.

Your tale afflicts
 My heart. A mighty Sovereign so reduced!
 But say; survive your royal parents yet?

CALAF.

They do.

BARAK.

Thrice blessed intelligence! then hope
 Once more revives.

CALAF.

We journeyed to the land
Of Carazan; where, to allay the pangs
Of hunger fierce that preyed upon our frames,
I wrestled with my dignity, and earned
Our daily pittance as a labourer —
A common labourer, in the royal gardens!

BARAK.

O state degrading for a Prince like you!

CALAF.

While occupied in this ignoble task,
It chanced the fair Adelma, daughter of
The King, saw, pitied, and concluding well
My occupation was beneath my station,
Next condescended — (why should I conceal
The truth from such a faithful friend?) to love me.
Her father had unhappily engaged
In a disastrous war with great Altoum.

BARAK.

This was an act, bordering, 'twas thought, on sheer
Insanity.

CALAF.

Perhaps; but, to be brief —

The King, his Queen, and royal family
Were finally made prisoners, and ere long,
As fame reported, barbarously murdered!
'Twas then the dear companions of my route
In many a danger past, renewed with me
Their pilgrimage. — We traversed mountain-wilds,
And forests drear, which foot of man before
Had ne'er imprinted. After wondrous 'scapes
From many an imminent danger, we arrived
At Berlas: there, for nearly three long years,
I earned our daily bread by manual labour!

BARAK.

Abstain from this humiliating tale,

And drown past sorrows in the cheering tide
Of the more prosperous fortunes, which, since then,
Have doubtless flowed around you.

CALAF.

Around me?

Mistaken man! my story's near its close.
The Khan of Berlas had a sparrow-hawk,
Which he much valued. 'Twas his chance to lose,
And mine to find, the bird. I took it to him.
He asked my name. I said, evasively,
I was a luckless exile, who maintained
Myself and parents by my daily toil.
The Khan, as moved by pity, promised me
He would support them kindly; but good Barak,
Mark the result! the extent of his great bounty
Amounted to no more than this; he sent them —
Ignobly sent them — to a hospital!!
There, in a state of wretchedness, thy King
And royal mistress still remain. Alas!
'Twere better they had perished, than be thus
Dishonored.

BARAK.

O, ye mighty Gods!

CALAF.

The Khan

Then furnished me with suitable apparel,
And giving me a purse, and fleet-horse, bade me
Depart, and seek my fortune. — My fond sire,
With my afflicted mother, wished once more
To join, and bear me company, where'er
My luckless destiny might lead; but this
I steadily refused. — "Forbid it Heaven,"
I cried, "that my loved parents should again
"Traverse the desert-wilds, and brave for me
"The pelting of the pitiless storm, yet find
"Perhaps no resting place!" — We parted.

BARAK (*in tears*).

I had not thought to play the woman thus.

CALAF.

My steed, more faithful than my former fortunes,
Bore me in safety over hill and plain.
His speed was like the lightning-flash; his courage,
That of the lion in his rage, his strength
Surpassing all description; and away!
Away! and yet a way we dashed! nor halted,
'Till we had passed the borders! From that time,
Although less wildly, we have steadily
Pursued our course through many a region vast;
And here am I in China's capital,
Far, far removed from thee, my native land,
And you, still dearer parents. I would now
Enlist me as a soldier in the ranks
Of China's thrice-renowned Emperor,
And earn fame — honor — in the tented field.
I know not what gay festival is held
To day in Pekin: but I sought in vain
For shelter in the suburbs, 'till, at last,
Pitying my helpless and exhausted state,
A fair and generous lady in yon house
Kindly received me.

BARAK.

My beloved Prince!

That lady is my wife.

CALAF.

Thy wife! thou art
Indeed most fortunate, in thus possessing
A consort with a feeling heart. My spirits,
Which, drooping, sank, but late, like flagging winds,
Also, like them, resume their buoyancy.
Farewell! I will rejoin thee soon beneath
Thy hospitable roof; but purpose now

To stroll into the city, and behold
 The unknown *spectacle* which, it would appear,
 Has brought so many citizens together;
 Then seek the Emperor, and entreat of him
 Some post of honor in his service.

He is going; but BARAK stops him.)

BARAK.

Sir!

Pause ere you go! How would your Highness grieve
 To see the lamentable sacrifice
 Even now preparing! Know, you have arrived
 In a distracted country.

CALAF.

Ha! how so?

BARAK.

And have you then to learn that Turandot,
 The Emperor's only daughter, by her crimes,
 Makes the whole city overflow with tears?

CALAF.

Oh! you remind me of an idle tale
 I heard in Carazan. The rumour went
 That Royal Kercobad's young heir, came here
 To woo the Princess Turandot; but failing
 To solve some foolish and mysterious riddles
 Propounded by his lady-love, was doomed
 To lose, not her alone, but life as well!
 The stupid populace believed the fiction!
 Though wiser heads, of course, laughed at it. Tell me,
 Supposing even half of it were true,
 How could a young and lovely maiden act
 A part so barbarous?

BARAK.

Your Highness seems
 To jest! alas! you'll find the tale too true.
 This fair Imperial maiden, Turandot,
 Famed for her wisdom, and her matchless beauty,

Possessing too a form so fine, so perfect,
That hitherto no limner has been found
To do it common justice; even she,
From pride, or pique, or foolish prejudice,
Perchance from all united, steeled her heart
Against the shafts of Love, and made resolve
Ne'er to wed mortal man! Thence many a young,
And princely suitor has in vain —

CALAF (*interrupting him.*)

Thy news
Is old: I heard it, as I said before,
In Carazan, and deemed it fabulous.
But pardon me. — Conclude thy marvellous tale.

BARAK.

The Emperor expressed a natural wish
That his loved child should be united to
The heir of some great Potentate; but she
Ever successfully opposed that wish.
Alas! how blind must be that father's love,
Which will not suffer him to check the whims
And frivolous caprices of his child!
Thus was Altoum, in his old age, surrounded
By mighty Sovereigns, who at the deep scorn
Of Turandot disgusted, had become
His secret foes. Suspecting this, and feeling
He was fast waning in the vale of years,
And that the silent tomb must shortly be
His resting place, he pressed the haughty maid
More closely; wisely urging that her marriage
With some illustrious suitor might perchance
Lessen the rancour of his enemies,
And that he thus might tranquilly, as wont,
Spend the brief time allotted to him here,
And close his eyes in peace.

CALAF.

He reasoned well.

BARAK.

The princess' pride at this was much offended.
She strove, in vain, to change her father's purpose.
Her earnest prayers — her sighs — her tears — availed not.
He had thrown off the doating parent, and
Assumed the stern, dread Sovereign; so at last
She begged of him — what thinkest thou, my Prince?

CALAF.

I scarcely *think* about it; but 'twas said
In Carazan, the Princess coaxed, and cozened,
And finally induced the weak old man
To pass an edict that no royal Prince
Should gain her hand, unless he previously
Solved certain riddles, in the grand Divan
To be by her propounded; in which case,
(So ran the silly tale) the lucky guesser
Of these same riddles, should the Princess wed:
But then there was a clause that doomed all those
Who *boggled* in their tasks, to lose their heads!

(BARAK nods assent)

Go to! tell this thy wondrous tale to *others*;
For I have heard, and ridicule, the fable.

BARAK.

The fable! O ye Gods!

CALAF.

Once more, good Barak,
Your pardon for these interruptions. On
With thy strange history

BARAK.

The Emperor
At first was resolute, but the cruel princess,
By her false rhetoric, like a wily snake,
Prevailed on him to pass the hateful law.
"Why hesitate to sign?" the artful maid
Exclaimed, "for surely ne'er will amorous Prince
"Be found to risk his head on such a venture.

"So shall I rid me of the suitor-train,
 "Who persecute me with their hateful love,
 "And live in calm tranquility. But if,
 "To dwell on an impossibility,
 "Some mad adventurer should court the danger,
 "The fault will be his own — not yours, or mine."
 Thus urged — thus pressed, the doating Emperor
 Signed the unnatural edict!

(CALAF shakes his head doubtingly)

Would my tale
 Were but the whisperings of idle rumour!

CALAF.

Well! since you thus affirm so solemnly
 That which I deemed a fable, I must needs
 Believe it; but, of course, no hair-brained lover,
 Save the unhappy Prince of Carazan,
 As yet has entered on the desperate task
 Of wooing on such fearful terms?

BARAK.

Alas!

Look yonder, sir, and view those trunkless heads,
 But late belonging to illustrious Princes,
 Who in this dangerous enterprise embarked,
 But failing to expound the Princess' riddles,
 Fell by the executioner's sword!

CALAF *(turning round towards the City Gate)*

O sight

Distressing! Lived there really such weak youths,
 As would their heads endanger for a monster?

BARAK.

Nay, say not so; from whatsoever lands
 The strangers came to woo her, soon as they
 Beheld her dazzling beauty, each declared,
 As by enchantment, he would rather die,
 Than live without her.

CALAF.

The more mad-men they!
But who are these, a slow and solemn train
Of damsels moving towards yon cemetery?

BARAK.

The daughters of Ambassadors from five
Most puissant sovereigns, whose beloved sons
Perished for love of Turandot. Their sires
Came in succession, to accuse Altoum
Of unexampled tyranny and murder,
Threaten unceasing vengeance, and declare
War, to the death, against both him and his.
Though bringing these insulting messages,
Their sacred offices protected them;
So they were suffered to remain in Pekin.
But soon Altoum, with his resistless forces,
Fought, conquered, and deposed the potentates
Who had so grievously defied and wronged him,
(Since he'd but acted from necessity,
Under the strong compulsion of an oath)
Smote their chief cities with the edge o'the sword,
Their kingdoms held in vassalage, and led
Their nobles into dread captivity.

CALAF.

O war! what horrors does thy scourge inflict!

BARAK.

The Ambassadors of home, and country reft,
As forming part of its nobility,
Still are permitted to reside among us,
With their respective families. They are
Supported by the liberal charity
Of him they came to censure and revile!
And hither daily, in procession, walk
Their blooming daughters, clad in virgin-white,
To pay, before the sepulchre that holds
The headless trunks of their departed Princes,

Their mournful homage. Let us follow them,
Not to obtrude upon their sorrows; but
To witness, at a most respectful distance,
Their ardent zeal and loyalty.

CALAF.

Come on!

(*Exeunt*)

ACT I. — SCENE II.

A burial ground.

Enter a procession of young maidens, and halts before a sepulchre.

The Maidens bow themselves reverently to the earth before it.

1st MAIDEN.

Prince Pharamond! this mirtle-sprig, lopped off,
Even like thyself, from parent-branch; like thee,
But late so gay, so flourishing, I offer
In honor of thy hallowed memory.

(*throws the sprig on the ground.*)

2nd MAIDEN.

And I these laurels, thrice renowned Saib!
As tributes to thy fame — thy victories.

(*strews the laurels.*)

3rd MAIDEN.

Accomplished Prince! great, wise, and good Penang!
Accept these jasmines, fair as were thy hopes,
Ere tyrant-woman laid them in the dust.

(*throws down the jasmines.*)

4th MAIDEN.

Son of the morning, young and blooming Zel!
This fragrant rose, shortlived, and beautiful,
Plucked in its pride and gladness, and whose fate
So much resembles thine, I here present,
In sad commemoration of thy loss.

(*throws it down.*)

5th MAIDEN.

Prince of the mountains, royal Zaracan!
No other gifts do I presume to bring

As offerings to thy fame, unless it be
 The incense of the heart, the silent tear,
 The rising sigh, oft checked, yet checked in vain,
 The unaffected wretchedness, with which
 I mourn the past, anticipate the future.

CHORUS OF MOURNERS.

May the great Gods their dazzling glories shed
 On the pure souls of the illustrious dead!
 They have escaped Grief's troubled sea below,
 For realms above, where Joy's pure waters flow!
*(The maidens again make their obeisances as before, and then
 slowly retire in procession.)*

(Enter CALAF and BARAK.)

CALAF.

Ah! what a touching and affecting scene!

BARAK.

It was indeed, and yet, most strange to tell,
 Another Prince, who viewed the ceremony
 But *yesterday*, was mad enough, *to day*,
 To claim the hand of Turandot, and guess
 At her accursed riddles! — Like the rest,
 He utterly failed; and like the rest, *must perish*.
 Yes, but this morn afforded fatal proof
 That wisdom was no shield against her charms;
 For the Crown-Prince of Samarcand, a youth
 In learned arts and sciences well-read,
 Famed for his eloquence, and deeply versed
 In poesy, and the abstruser studies,
 Forthwith will lose his head! The Emperor grieves
 He passed this dreadful law; his cruel daughter
 Rejoices in it! *(Shouts from the city.)*

Ha! these deafning shouts

Too fatally proclaim the uplifted sword
 Has fallen on its victim. To avoid
 The dreadful sight, I left the mourning city,
 And chanced to meet your Highness.

CALAF.

Noble Barak!

Thou tellest me indeed most startling news.
Can gentle woman's nature be so base,
As thou describest this Turandot's to be?

BARAK.

Well may you ask the question. — So it is,
My Prince. — A sister* of my wife has long
Been an attendant in the Princess' harem,
And gives a melancholy history
Of her Imperial mistress, who, at times,
Acts more the savage tigress, than the maid.
She has conceived a most unnatural hate
Against the nobler sex, while to the softer
She's kind enough, except where pride restrains her.

CALAF.

How I despise this fair, Imperial fiend!
Who, cold and heartless, only loves herself!

BARAK.

See, here comes Ismael, the trusty friend,
And faithful servant of the enamoured Prince,
Whom this most fatal day has numbered with
The dead. His brow is pale, his eyes are filled
With bitter tears. What, ho! friend! noble Ismael!

(Enter ISMAEL weeping; he takes BARAK by the hand.)

ISMAEL.

'Tis over! yes, the stroke of death has fallen.

BARAK.

Ah! why permit thy gracious Prince to appear
In the Divan?

ISMAEL.

Nay, nay, reproach me not.
Oft did I warn, request, beseech, adjure him,
To shun the danger; but my friendly voice

* NOTE. In the original daughter.

Was vain; he would not hear! the Gods themselves
 Could scarcely have opposed successfully
 His wilful purpose!

BARAK.

Then take comfort, Sir.

ISMAEL.

No, never. I beheld him die; I stood
 Beside the royal youth: his last faint sigh,
 Like a keen dagger, pierced my loyal bosom.
 "Nay, good my lord! kind servant! friend!" said he,
 "Weep not for me; I die most willingly,
 "Since she, the loved, the beautiful, the wise,
 "My soul's fair idol, is denied me. — May
 "My royal father pardon me for this.
 "By his command I entered on my travels,
 "And here I end them. Give into his hand
 "This fatal picture. When he shall behold
 "Its marvellous beauty, think you he will blame
 "His son? Oh! no." — And then, upon the lips
 Of the sweet witch in that deceitful picture,
 Full many a loving kiss did he imprint,
 As if in death itself, he still adored
 Its cruel author!

BARAK.

Brave, devoted youth!

ISMAEL.

Then knelt he down, the sabre brightly gleamed,
 The fatal stroke was given; and forth there gushed
 A torrent of as noble blood, as e'er
 Warmed mortal veins. The headless body fell,
 While in the executioner's base hands,
 The head itself, still beautiful in death,
 Remained. I saw no more; for like to one
 Smitten by the thunder of the Gods, I fell,
 Insensible; and, on recovering, fled
 From the abhorred scene. (*Casting the picture on the ground.*)

Lie there, lie there,
 Thou most accursed picture, trampled in
 The dust, detested, and despised. Ah! would
 I could but crush thy fair original,
 „The tigress-hearted“, as I now do thee!
 And shall I tell his royal father this?
 No, no, — I dare not. From my native land
 Henceforth self-exiled will I be, and seek
 A home amid the wilderness: yes, there
 Will I for ever dwell, for ever mourn,
 While life remains, my honored master's son. *(Exit)*

BARAK.

Prince Calaf! mark you this?

CALAF.

Too well. — Surprise,
 Grief, indignation, horror — *all* distract me.
 But let me view this most inspiring bauble,
 That such a magic charm possesses.

BARAK.

Sir,
 Beware! What would you? O ye Gods!

CALAF.

How now!
 May I not lift a picture from the ground?
 And snatch one glimpse at this enchanting sphynx?
(He raises the picture.)

BARAK *(trying to prevent him.)*

Better you gazed on grim Medusa's head!
 Away, my Prince, nor dare to look on it!

CALAF.

What phrenzy maddens thee? If thou thyself
 Be lovely woman's slave, so am not I.
 A Siren's smile cannot ensnare my soul,
 And in a moment hold my heart its captive;
 Much less can mortal pencil witch away
 My senses; so thy caution's out of place,

Applied to me; for, trust me, any thing
Might win my heart, in preference to — *a picture.*
(*He is about to look at it.*)

BARAK.

Still, still, I warn you! spurn it! cast it from you!

CALAF.

Tormentor, peace! (*examines the picture and gazes on it, as
in perfect astonishment.*)

What see I?

BARAK.

Luckless gaze!

CALAF.

Barak!

BARAK.

Unhappy Prince!

CALAF.

My loyal Barak!

BARAK (*aside.*)

Witness ye Gods! that I have done my utmost
To save the headstrong youth.

CALAF.

Ah! Barak! Barak!

Can these sweet eyes, these soft, enchanting features,
These bland, mild looks, be yet accompanied
By such a flinty heart as thou describest?

BARAK.

Such is the dreadful fact. More lovely far
Than this poor picture, is fair Turandot.
Her countenance is like the Sun that breaks
In morning lustre on the mountain's brow;
Her figure is perfection; for her mind,
'Tis stored with Nature's richest, rarest gifts.
Even half her charms no pencil can portray.
But ah! her fiend-like cruelty's unbounded!
Then cast far from you, sir, the accursed picture:
Your Highness cannot trace in that sweet face,

The vice long harboured in the savage heart
Of its more sweet original.

CALAF.

Away!

Would'st frighten me with groundless fears? O fair
And heavenly creature! what bright eyes! what lips!
What witchery dwells on that commanding brow!
It were Elysium to possess a maid
So beautiful! a Princess so divine!

*(He stands as lost in amazement, then goes
to BARAK, and seizes his hand.)*

Barak! — betray me not. I'll try my luck,
And stake my life upon the chance to gain
The brightest maiden in the world. *(to the picture.)*

Yes, yes,

Loveliest of all creation! yet awhile,
And it may be, another sacrifice
Will be presented at thy shrine. O Fortune!
Once more I woo thy favor. Mayest thou
At length be kind! Fair idol of my soul!
I will away to the divan, and die
For thee, or bear thee off my prize.

*(While he has been speaking, a crowd has collected round
the city-gate. Mournful cries are heard.)*

BARAK.

Behold!

There is the head of the unfortunate Prince,
Whose purple life-blood has just paid the price
Of his devoted love! Should not this sight
Your just alarm create? The same base hands
Which placed *that* where it stands, may by its side,
Ere long, place *yours*. Oh! do not go, my Lord!
Your Highness must not, cannot, be so reckless,
So lost to reason, as i'the very teeth
Of that dread warning, still persist to court
A certain, and a fatal destiny.

In fancy's view already do I see
 Your gory head high-lifted in mid-air,
 As a fresh caution to all desperate youths,
 Who would thus venture madly on a task,
 So wild, so hopeless, so impossible!

CALAF (*gazing on the head.*)

Thou luckless Prince! What native majesty
 Yet lingers in thy palid face! as if
 Struggling with death for mastery! (*turning to Barak*)
 My friend!

Too much of tears hast thou already shed
 For my imagined death: but cheer thee, cheer thee!
 And let thy hopes soar highly: above all,
 Conceal my name within thy bosom's core.
 Follow me not; but give thy honest blessing
 On this my glorious enterprise, and take
 My blessing in return. And ye,
 My dear and aged parents! should I fail
 In my high daring, well reflect that one
 So persecuted by the Gods, has nought
 To lose; though he have much to hope for.
 Once more, my faithful Barak, fare thee well!
 Should I but solve the riddles, be assured
 I will requite thee nobly for thy love,
 And longtried friendship. If the Gods decree
 That I must fall, why, be it so; but still,
 I'll fall as should become a Monarch's son.
 Allay thy fears, be tranquil, and be happy.

(*He is about to depart, when enter
 SKIRINA from her house.*)

BARAK.

No, never, never. — My beloved wife!
 Let him not pass; he goes to his destruction;
 For he would try to solve the Princess' riddles!

SKIRINA (*to CALAF.*)

Wo, wo! What hear I? Are you not my guest?

Then take my humble counsel. Do not rush
On certain death!

CALAF.

Hear me fair misstress! — 'Tis
This lovely picture that decides my fate.

SKIRINA.

Alas! how chanced he to behold it?

BARAK.

By

A most unfortunate accident.

CALAF.

Dear lady!

My steed, in poor requital for thy kindness,
Leave I with thee. — Pray keep it for my sake;
And take this purse of gold, which now contains
My all. I have no further need of it.
If I survive this day, I shall become
Possessor of a mighty Emperor's wealth,
And that rich gem of gems, his beauteous daughter.
If I must perish, 'tis more useless still.
Pray to the Gods for my success. I go,
Perchance to death, — perchance to victory,
And love, and happiness. Adieu!

(Exit)

BARAK.

My master!

O my dear master! But he hears me not!

SKIRINA.

Thy master! dost thou know this noble youth?
What are his name and quality?

BARAK.

Good wife!

Forbear to question me on points 'twere best
Remain *unquestioned*. Although full of dread
For the result, I do not quite despair.
The wit and genius of this gallant youth
Equal his courage; nay, the travelled sage

Might envy well his talents and deep learning.
 Come then, Skirina, let us take his gold,
 And sacrifice to the immortal Gods,
 And ask their blessing on the daring act
 He contemplates; nor let the poor remain
 Unaided by his bounty. Let them kneel
 Before our holy altars, and lift up
 Their humble prayers for his success. Come! come!

(Exeunt into the house.)

END OF FIRST ACT.

ACT II. — SCENE I.

(The hall of the grand divan. TRUFALDIN, chief of the eunuchs, stands gravely in the door-way, leading to the divan, directing the blacks within to put the room in order. Enter BRIGELLA.)

TRUFALDIN.

Come, bustle, bustle, slaves! and hastily make
 Due preparations to receive, as wont,
 His most celestial Majesty. Spread forth
 The tapestry before the Imperial throne.
 There, to the right, will sit her gracious Highness,
 The Princess Turandot.

BRIGELLA *(looking through the folding doors, and surprised at the preparations).*

Trufaldin, tell me,
 Why all this hurry? Wherefore do you put

The grand divan in order with such haste,
As life and death depended on dispatch?

TRUFALDIN (*not attending to him, and pointing within.*)
There sit the doctors; there their tablets stand,
Whereon they pore and write, then write and pore
Again. —

BRIGELLA.

But what's the reason for all this?

TRUFALDIN.

The reason? Know you not the Emperor,
The Princess, and the learned doctors, come
Within the hour, to the divan?

BRIGELLA.

Why so?

TRUFALDIN.

Another Prince is just arrived, and claims
The *glorious* privilege to lose his head!

BRIGELLA.

'Tis only two hours since the young Crown-Prince
Of Samarcand was slain!

TRUFALDIN.

But thanks to fate,

And youthful vanity, another fool
Succeeds him!

BRIGELLA.

How canst thou so lightly speak
Of human suffering, and death?

TRUFALDIN.

Why not,

Since certain profit ever comes of it?
'Tis like a wedding sir; for all the harem
Get by it one day's liberty. For my part,
I only act as other people do.
So many heads, so many holydays.

BRIGELLA.

Black! thy dark countenance bespeaks thy nature,
Which seems insensible to pity.

TRUFALDIN.

Pity!

That word we know not, since so many Princes
Have visited our court, and forfeited
Their pates, as earnest of their gallantry.
So keep thy pity to thyself. 'Tis written
Plainly enough upon the city-gate,
What fate awaits those mad-men. Yes, the hat
Missing its love-sick tenant, may be sure
To find him there.

BRIGELLA.

Shame that the gallant youths,
Who do our Emperor honor, in accepting
Such hard conditions, should be sacrificed
For a vain woman, if they fail to solve
A few contemptible riddles.

TRUFALDIN.

Not at all.

They wilfully bring the evil on themselves.
One cannot travel nowadays, forsooth,
Without *philandering* by the way with some
Fair lady! — When an idle gallant lives
At his dear father-in-laws, he's sure to eat
To surfeit; therefore do these Princes come
With scanty knapsacks. Should they chance to fail,
And yet be spared, they would have nothing else
To do, but starve. Then why not save them trouble?
And very *mercifully* chop their heads off?

BRIGELLA.

You reason most *profoundly*!

TRUFALDIN.

Hear me out.

They are the sons of tributary Khans,
Who, for her wealth alone, our Princess woo.

BRIGELLA.

I don't believe it.

TRUFALDIN.

But I know it, sir.

Now if this useful law had not been passed,
The lowest of these *would-be* Emperors,
Might think himself a match for Turandot!
Why, sir, when first the thrifty gallants came
A courting, verily, the Imperial palace
Was crammed with them — yes, literally crammed!
And when this host of plagues their luck would try,
They, one and all, were merely on their travels!
Yes, "*on their travels!*" — that's the very phrase!
In short, it was a new edition of
The tower of Babel! — They forsooth would see
Our famous *dancing waters! singing tree!*
The bird that reads! and all our wondrous sights!
There was a small *addition* to all this —
They had to solve three little riddles. If
Their wit then failed, what was the consequence?
They lost their stupid heads; — but what of that?
They all pretended they were *dying* for
The Princess; so to verify their words,
They were sent packing to a better world.

BRIGELLA.

A man may be all that he ought to be,
Without the subtle cunning of a sphinx.

TRUFALDIN.

For my part, I conceive it very kind
And condescending in fair Turandot,
To try the ready wit of her admirers.
Should the *first* riddle be discovered, she
A second instantly propounds; That answered,
A *third*, more puzzling still! and even granting
That some poor devil chanced to interpret each,
He might as well be hanged, as take a wife
Of our young Princess' high and haughty spirit!

BRIGELLA.

Thou art a fool, as well as knave, Trufaldin.

And so, because the Princess is a vixen,
And her admirers cannot rightly guess
Three villanous riddles, each young, Princely lover
Must lose his head! Why 'tis most barbarous!
A law so monstrous ne'er before was heard of.

TRUFALDIN.

Why can'st not let these Princely blockheads act
Just as they please? and why insult me here,
In the divan, because I am a black?
Riddles are pleasing trifles in their way,
Those of the Princess, more especially.
They lead to consequences, which are sure
To try what *blood* each *traveller's* composed of.

BRIGELLA.

The natural result of all is this:
The Princess still is single, and the state
Involved in quarrels everlasting. He,
Who'd peril life, to gain a maiden's love,
Is well entitled to her gratitude.
Not for the wealth of all the East, would I
My destiny entramel with a consort
Of such a fiendish temper.

TRUFALDIN.

To say truth,

The lady's somewhat of a *termagant*.

(A trumpet is heard at a distance.)

But by that distant trumpet-blast I know
The Emperor soon will visit the divan.

BRIGELLA.

Then we must vanish.

TRUFALDIN.

Yes; there lies your road,
And this way mine; and so good day to you.

(*Exeunt on different sides.*)

ACT II. — SCENE II.

The grand divan.

(A door leading from the Emperor's apartments, opens. Enter a procession of soldiers, jugglers and tumblers, followed by eight doctors stalking pedantically; then TARTAGLIA and PANTALON; and lastly, the EMPEROR himself, a gorgeous canopy being supported over his head by eight slaves. — PANTALON and TARTAGLIA place themselves on each side of the EMPEROR's throne, the eight doctors being in the back ground. The remainder range themselves down the sides of the stage. — At the entrance of the Emperor, all fall on their knees, and bowing, salute the ground, 'till his Majesty has ascended his throne. — The doctors take their places at their respective desks. On a signal from PANTALON, the march ceases).

ALTOUM.

When, faithful subjects! will our national grief
Find solace? When shall care and sorrow cease?
Scarcely has Samarcand's young Prince become
A martyr to his love, than yet another
Appears, to lacerate our bleeding heart!
Unhappy daughter! doomed to pierce our soul
With pangs too great for utterance! Our rash oath
That strictly binds us to this barbarous law,
Is registered in Heaven. How dare we break it?
Ye noblest props and pillars of our strength,
Assist us with your counsel.

PANTALON.

Mighty sovereign!

My loyal zeal would urge me to submit
None ever heard before of such an oath;
Or such a cruel law, as doomed fond lovers
To lose their heads, for yielding to a passion
The noblest breasts are swayed by. In my youth,
Leaving my dear home in a Christian land,
I travelled in each quarter of the globe,
And came at last to China, where it pleased

Your gracious Majesty to notice me
With condescending kindness, and instal me
As chancellor of the empire. Were I now
My country to revisit, and relate
The hasty vows, strange oaths, and stranger acts,
With all the wondrous sights I here have witnessed,
I should be utterly discredited.
With us none ever heard of gallant youths
Condemned to death for loving the fair ladies.
With us, my liege, the women love the men,
And in return, are by them idolized.

ALTOUM.

Once having sworn, the question's simply this —
May we commit a perjury?

THE DOCTORS.

No, no.

ALTOUM.

Alas! you echo but my inmost thoughts.
The mighty Gods have registered our oath,
Which, broken once, would bring destruction on
Ourselves, our family, and empire. Say,
Tartaglia, have you yet essayed to turn
The gallant stranger from his mad design?

TARTAGLIA.

Yes, sire; but all my reasoning was vain.
His answer was — "*Fair Turandot, or death.*"
Most truly worthy seems he of the honor
He would aspire to. His fine countenance,
His princely air, his gallant, noble bearing;
Still more than these, the brilliant qualities
Of his enlightend mind, enchanted me.
How lamentable that a Prince so wise,
So mild, so modest, should attempt a task
So desperate! In all my life, ne'er knew I
A youth more perfect, more accomplished.

ALTOUM.

Let

An instant sacrifice be made to Fohi:
So may the God endow this royal Prince
With wit to solve the riddles; yet we fear
That will not be.

PANTALON.

Renowned Emperor!

Already have thy servants sacrificed
Three hundred oxen to the mighty Fohi,
Three hundred heifers to the twinkling stars,
Three hundred milk-white horses to the Sun,
And to his sister-Moon three hundred swine.

ALTOUM.

'Tis well. Now introduce the aspiring youth
To our Imperial presence.

PANTALON.

I obey.

(Exit PANTALON, and reenters, ushering in Prince CALAF, accompanied by a guard of honor. The Prince kneels before the Emperor.)

ALTOUM.

Arise young Prince! *(CALAF rises) (aside)*

What noble features! *(aloud)*

Tell me,

Where is your native country? what your name?

CALAF.

Pardon me sire, that I my name conceal.

ALTOUM.

What! shall a nameless wanderer presume
To woo an Emperor's daughter?

CALAF.

I am born

Of royal parentage; and should I gain
My ardent suit, my name, rank, birth, and country
To your dread Majesty will I unfold.

Permit me to withhold them for the present.
 Suffice to say, they are not quite unworthy
 Of your fair daughter's greatness

ALTOUM.

Youth! your words
 Are bold, and wise, and candid; but if you
 Solve the three riddles, and it then appear
 You are not what you say,

CALAF.

(interrupting him) My leige! that doubt
 Should not be harboured in an Emperor's breast.
 If it should please the Gods that I succeed,
 And yet my rank's not equal to my fortune,
 As punishment for my audacity,
 Still let me perish; and permit my bones
 To whiten in the Sun.

ALTOUM.

Your true nobility
 Of soul, brave youth, checks every doubt. But ah!
 Permit a wretched monarch, from his throne,
 To entreat that you abstain from your design.
 Reflect upon the danger you would court.
 Reflect! So deep an interest do we take
 In one so young, so brave, that we engage
 To enrich, and load you with distinguished honors,
 If you but yield to our humane request.
 Ah! do not hope to win our daughter's hand.
 Compel us not again to act the tyrant.
 Enough young Princes have already fallen.
 Spare us the anguish of lamenting you,
 And of upbraiding bitterly ourself,
 And our unnatural-daughter. Daughter said we!
 She merits not the name; for is she not
 The cause of all our sorrow and despair?

CALAF.

Great Emperor! much I pity you. For me,

Once having seen your charming daughter's portrait,
 My soul is wedded to my purpose. If
 I but succeed in my ambitious hopes,
 The loveliest maiden in the world is mine.
 Without her, life would be a burthen.

PANTALON.

Sir,

Have you beheld the gory heads displayed
 Upon our city-gate? I ask no more.
 Cousole yourself with some more gentle dame,
 In your own land. Why Prince! you might as well
 Go teach an infant guide a fiery steed,
 As vainly strive to expound our Princess' riddles!
 Our learned doctors for these four years past,
 Have racked their brains in guessing them, yet still
 Are not a whit more forward than at first.
 The down yet scarcely decks your upper lip.
 How then may you dare hope to soar above
 The bright conceptions of such learned men?

CALAF.

Old man, you speak in vain. Fair Turandot,
 Or death!

TARTAGLIA.

Thou woo the Imperial Turandot!
 A nameless wanderer! What bold presumption!
 We play not here for *nuts*; but *heads*, young sir.
 Your chance, you must allow, is mighty small;
 And what's the stake you forfeit, if you lose?
 Your life! yes, stripling, 'tis indeed your life!
 His Majesty, from his enthroned seat,
 Has warned, implored you, not to persevere
 In your mad object. — Can no other maid,
 Save the Imperial Turandot, suffice
 For your wild passion? Many a lady-fair,
 Depend upon it, would be kind to such
 A handsome wooer. Take it not amiss

That I thus freely speak. Heaven knows, it is
From pure compassion.

CALAF.

I will hear no more.

Fair Turandot, or death.

ALTOUM.

Then have thy wish.

Conduct our child to this our grand divan.

We must assent to one more sacrifice. (*Exit part of the guard*)

CALAF.

Yes, I shall soon behold her heavenly charms.

Be firm, my soul, that her bewitching beauty

May not distract my thoughts, and rob me of

What little reason yet remains to me.

Gods of my country! hover o'er, and bless me

With strength of mind to meet the impending danger.

Wise councillors of this august divan,

Who, from the brief space of my days, prejudge

That I must fail in my high enterprise;

Deem me not too presumptuous and perverse;

But rather pity me. I have no will

But what my destiny and passion dictate.

Yes, fate impels; 'tis mightier than I.

(*A march. Enter TRUFALDIN carrying a sabre on his shoulder, followed by his blacks, with drums, trumpets &c. Then the ladies of the harem with lyres: after them, ADELMA and ZELIMA, the latter carrying some sealed papers on a silver plate. TRUFALDIN and his blacks bow their heads, and kiss the earth before the Emperor. The ladies kneel, with their hands to their heads. Lastly, enter TURANDOT, in splendid Chinese apparel. — Her look is haughty, proud, and majestic. The councillors doctors &c. bow to her, with their faces to the ground. The Emperor rises. The Princess curtsies, takes his hand, mounts her throne, and seats herself. Her attendants, ADELMA and ZELIMA, take their stations on each side of the Princess' throne. ADELMA, as being of a fallen royal house, to the right. TRUFALDIN takes the plate from ZELIMA, and spreads the papers before the doctors. Then making his obeisances to the Emperor and Princess, he retires to the Emperor's left. The march ceases.*)

TURANDOT.

Where's the rash Prince, who warnings heeding not,
So oft repeated by the untimely death
Of my unfortunate suitors, to his life
A deadly enemy, would sacrifice
Himself in such a fatal cause?
(ALTOUM points to CALAF, who stands as if delighted and
astounded at the excessive beauty of the Princess.)

My daughter!

There stands he, like a man entranced! Well worthy
Is that accomplished youth to be thy husband;
And if as such thou wilt accept him, on
Our bended knees we'll thank thee heartily.

(TURANDOT aside to ZELIMA.)

Oh! I am lost!

ZELIMA (aside to TURANDOT.)

Why so, dear Mistress!

TURANDOT (aloud.)

Sire!

And ye, sage councillors, and noble peers!
My conscience, dwelling on past sorrows, tells me
I dare not, were I willing, be his wife.

ZELIMA (aside)

Oh! give him easy questions.

TURANDOT (aside to ZELIMA.)

Think upon

My pride — my honor!

ADELMA (aside.)

Is it all a dream?

Or do I see the stranger-youth, who toiled
In my late royal Father's gardens? Yes,
'Tis he! Heaven grant that my impetuous feelings
Have not betrayed me!

TURANDOT.

Prince! you yet have time
To change your desperate purpose. The wise Gods

Alone can dive into the heart; they know
 My nature is not cruel, though the world
 Believes it so. — I will be firm, and ne'er
 Submit to be the wife, which simply means,
 In other words, the *slave*, of *tyrant-man*.
 My liberty's as sacred sir, as yours;
 Therefore my resolution well befits
 The daughter of an Emperor. I know
 That married dames are but mere humble tools
 To do their husbands' bidding. Why should man
 Such sovereignty and tyrannous sway possess?
 Of men I nothing ask. Why ask they me
 For Nature's sweetest boon, my personal freedom?

CALAF.

Dear maid, you quite reverse the picture! Men
 But ask for golden chains to bind themselves.

TURANDOT.

I hate them for their overbearing pride.
 They'll promise fair, and fawn with Summer-smiles,
 While humble wooers; but when they have snared
 Their gentle prey in wedlock's bands. Oh! *then*
 Come winter-clouds, and frowns, and storms, and tempests!
 Their will must *then* be instantly obeyed,
 How'er unjust! Have the kind Gods endowed me
 With the high spirit of my ancestors,
 Whose boldness won them empire, now to stoop
 From my Imperial dignity? and yield me
 A willing slave to a proud tyrant's yoke?
 Must *beauty* be a *beast* to wait on man?

CALAF.

No; *man* is born to wait on *it*; — to love,
 Honor, and cherish *woman*.

TURANDOT.

And to rule her!

CALAF (*smiling.*)

Not so, fair maid; for learned sages say
 Tis she rules him.

TURANDOT.

She ought; but ah! she does not.
 Woman's by nature free; and, like the Sun,
 Who all delighting in the upper Heaven,
 Flings his bright rays upon the nether earth,
 So beams *she* on *inferior man*, to cheer,
 Comfort, refine, delight, and solace him;
 Not to administer, right or wrong, to his
 Imperious will and pleasure.

CALAF.

Lovely maid!

My proudest wish is to administer
 To yours; but surely you deceive yourself,
 In thinking of my libelled sex so harshly.

TURANDOT.

Not only *think* I; but *well know*, that sex
 Merit my utter hatred and contempt.

CALAF.

Gods! what a noble, high, and haughty spirit!
 Where lives the enamoured youth that would not long
 By Love's soft aid to vanquish it? A form
 So fine, so perfect! what young Prince would deem
 His life too dearly sold, in purchasing
 So rich and rare a prize? The merchant ships
 His little venture on the ocean-waves,
 Daring for gain the stormy element;
 The hero risks, oft loses, life for glory.
 Then shall a royal Prince, who may not stoop
 To calculate on danger, when the love
 Of a fair maid is the bright goal he aims at —
 Shall he draw back? or falter in his purpose?
 Forbid it gallantry! forbid it honor!

TURANDOT.

Men's *gallantry* ere marriage; *may* be — *something*;
 Their *honor* sir, *before*, or *after* — *nothing*.

So charge me not with cruelty, because
I cannot love whom I am bound to hate.

CALAF.

O heavenly Princess! Goddess of my soul!
I do accuse you of no cruelty.
Then do not hate your lover, for that he
Must ever be your humble slave. No price
Is large enough for your surpassing beauty.
I have a life to pay for it; then take it,
If it so please you. Had I more to give,
It should be yours at asking.

ZELIMA (*aside to TURANDOT.*)

Dearest madam!

For mercy-sake propound three easy riddles.
Was ever seen before so sweet a youth?
How speaks his high soul in his flashing eye,
That beaming with love's tenderness, yet seems
With eagle-glance to brave the dazzling Sun!
Oh! well does he deserve your love.

ADELMA (*aside.*)

How wise!

How beautiful a stripling! wo is me!
He never can be mine. How oft have I,
When free, and in my native country, wished
He yet might prove some wandering Prince! That wish
Is now fulfilled; yet what avails it me?
The torch of Love rekindles in my breast,
With brighter, fiercer flames. I know him now
In royal birth my equal. Courage then,
My throbbing heart! I will not quite despair.

(*To TURANDOT.*)

Princess! what ails you? muster up your pride.
Confer not on a stranger-youth a prize
Too high for mortal man's presumptuous aim.

TURANDOT. (*aside.*)

And shall I yield me as the humble slave

Of haughty man? No, Turandot, bethink thee!
 Rouse all the woman in thy maiden-soul,
 Reflect upon thy secret oath—thy honor.
(aloud.) Unhappy Prince! prepare for the dread trial,
 You have demanded.

ALTOUM *(to CALAF.)*

'Tis not yet too late.

CALAF.

Sire! I repeat, fair Turandot, or death.

ALTOUM.

Then hear the sanguinary edict. — 'Tis
 Thy death-knell. Hear it, luckless Prince, and tremble.

TARTAGLIA takes a paper from his bosom, presses it to his breast, then to his forehead, and finally hands it to PANTALON. PANTALON having gone through the like ceremony, kisses the earth before the Emperor's throne, then rises, and stepping out into the midst of the divan, reads, in a loud voice, as follows.

The oath.

By great Fohi's head!

By the souls of the dead!

By the angels of light!

By the day, and the night!

By our father's tomb!

By our future doom!

By the Paradise-waters!

By Earth's sons and daughters!

By the sky, and the air!

By all things good and fair!

By the land, and the sea!

By eternity!

We swear that mortal Prince shall not
 Wed our dear daughter Turandot,
 Unless he first solve riddles three,
 By her in grand divan, to be
 Propounded; and the ambitious youth
 Failing therein, shall, of a truth,

Forfeit his head, on Pekin's gate
 To be stuck up. So speaketh Fate.
 This is the law, even by ourself decreed.
 We may not change it. Princes all, take heed!
*(PANTALON now hands over the paper to TARTAGLIA, with the
 same ceremony as before, and TARTAGLIA, with the like
 ceremony, presents it to ALTOUM.)*

ALTOUM.

O bloody edict! monument of our shame,
 And bitter anguish! But our oath! our oath!
 Ay, that's the thorn that rankles in our breast.
 By "Fohi's head" we swore, and must fulfil it.
 Princess of China! now propound your questions. —

(TURANDOT rises, and speaks as follows.)

There is a tree of short-lived birth, which yet
 Of mere old-age expires; but its last debt
 To Nature is no sooner paid, than lo!
 As wont, again it lives and blossoms! — Know,
 It spreads its leaves on one side to the light;
 To darkness on the other. To our sight
 It shews the names of all the giddy throng,
 Who gaily climb its branches green among.
 Now royal stranger, pray disclose to me
 The name and properties of this fair tree.

(She sits down. CALAF rises.)

CALAF.

Your slave most happy will esteem himself,
 Fair maiden! if no question more obscure
 Than this be put to him. This wondrous tree
 Of short lived-birth, which yet of mere old-age
 Expires; which has no sooner paid its debt
 To Nature, than again it lives and blossoms;
 Which spreads its leaves on one side to the light,
 To darkness on the other, and which shews
 The names of all the giddy throng who climb
 Among its branches — this same wondrous tree

Exemplifies — *the year*, with all its days,
And nights, and giddy sons and daughters.

PANTALON.

Joy!

It is correctly answered!

THE DOCTORS (*tearing their papers.*)

Optime!

The year! the year! the blest year! optime!

ALTOUM (*joyfully.*)

The Gods speak in thee, o my son, and thou
Wilt surely solve the two remaining riddles.

ZELIMA.

O. Heaven preserve him!

ADELMA (*aside.*)

Heaven preserve him not;
But let him perish, rather than become
The husband of my hated rival!

TURANDOT (*aside*)

What!

Shall I break my oath no mortal e'er to marry?
I must not — dare not. Though made privately,
'Tis full as binding as the Emperor's.
Yet must I strive against them. Heaven protect
My perilous condition! I will be
More calm, more bold. (*aloud to CALAF.*) Be not too
sanguine Prince!

Tis early yet. — Answer my second riddle.

(*She again rises and speaks.*)

Say, what is that so soft and bright,
Which beams a flashing, silvery light?
Which, never for a moment's still,
And alters ever at its will?
Which though in narrow space confined,
Gives a true picture of the mind,
Exceeding in its dazzling glory?
All that is bright and fair in story?

Or sung of at the generous feast
Of Princes through the glowing East?
(*CALAF after a short pause rises.*)

CALAF.

Enchanting Princess! had you but commanded
That I should draw comparison between
Your beauties, and all other beauteous things
The eye has seen, ear heard of, or the bright
Imaginings of Fancy conjured up,
My attempt would fail; for who could aught compare,
However brilliant, graceful, beautiful,
To one surpassing in her heavenly charms,
The whole earth's fairest daughter's? But the task
Assigned me now, is, happily, light and easy.
The wondrous thing so soft and bright, that beams
A flashing, silvery light; which is not still
Even for a moment, and which alters ever
At will! which, though confined in narrow space,
Gives a true picture of the mind, exceeding
In dazzling glory, all that's bright and fair
In story told, or sung of at the feast
Of eastern Prince — this wonder is — *the eye!*
Then let thine, beauteous Turandot, which pierces
My throbbing heart to madness, smile upon
Thy faithful lover; for despite of all
Thy cruelty, he worships — he adores thee.

PANTALON (*springing up joyfully.*)

'Tis well interpreted.

TARTAGLIA.

Correctly answerd!

THE DOCTORS (*tearing their papers.*)

The eye! the bright eye! optime! the eye!

(*A crash of music.*)

ALTOUM.

The Gods be praised! most unexpected fortune!
Now let him answer to the third, and last.

ZELIMA (*aside.*)

Would all were happily over!

ADELMA (*aside.*)

O my heart!

He answer's rightly; but is lost to thee!

(*aside to TURANDOT.*)

Princess! your cunning riddles have not puzzled;

Nor in the least perplexed him! but remember

Your pride requires you disappoint his hopes,

And daring arrogance.

(*TURANDOT rising.*)

Know, forward boy!

Confusion sooner shall the wide-world fill

Than I will yield me up to your ambition.

I hate you more than ever, and prefer

Death to your love! then leave my offended presence,

Or die a merited death.

CALAF.

Ah! cruel maid!

It is your hate alone perplexes me;

And since you deem my love unworthy of you,

Let me e'en sink to Hades!

(*droops his head.*)

ALTOUM.

No; look up

Accomplished youth, and pray the Gods to save

Your life, and crown you with success: that forth

From our divan, you may our daughter lead,

As your chaste bride. Remember Prince, you have

Another question yet to answer. Ah!

The nearer to the summit, worse the fall.

But daughter, let your questions past suffice.

What neer before young Prince, or learned sage,

Could guess, this youth has fathomed! Give him then

Your willing hand; for well he merits it.

TURANDOT.

Give him my hand! — forego the other question!

The law demands a third; the law shall have
Its course.

CALAF.

Then let it. My eventful fate
Is in the hands of the immortal Gods;
But I repeat — fair Turandot, or death.

TURANDOT.

Death — certain death! you have your wish; then listen.

(She rises from her throne.)

What's that, which through our happy land
Brings treasure to the Emperor's hand?

'Tis sharp as keenest sword can be,

Yet from its wound no blood we see!

It takes away, yet gives us more

Than ever we possessed before!

Though rude, despised by warrior bold,

It yields what oft he fights for — gold!

While health and calm content are sure

To be its hand-maidens. — No more.

Your boasted wit and wisdom try;

Name this mysterious thing; or — die!

CALAF *(covering his face with his hands.)*

That scornful glance unnerves me!

ALTOUM.

Luckless fate!

He hesitates! I fear he's lost! My son!

Collect your scattered senses!

ZELIMA.

How my heart

Is beating!

ADELMA *(aside.)*

Dearest Prince! you shall be mine;

For Love will teach me how to save you yet.

PANTALON.

Courage, young sir! you must not lose your head.

Wo! wo! — I fear me he's undone.

*(TURANDOT regards the Prince with great pity
and tenderness.)*

TURANDOT.

Alas!

Thou *wouldest* thy ruin! Now indeed thou *hast* it.

(*CALAF recovers himself, and looks steadfastly at TURANDOT.*)

CALAF.

Your scorn, loved Turandot, and heavenly beauty

Have for an instant only, scared my wits.

Reason resumes its sway. I can unfold

Your formidable secret. — 'Tis — "*the Plough.*"

(*The Doctors once more tear their papers, and exclaim.*)

The plough! yes, optime! The plough! The plough!

PANTALON.

Dear Prince, so young, and yet so wise! sincerely

Do I congratulate your Highness. Joy

So perfect ne'er knew I before.

TARTAGLIA.

Rejoice,

My gracious sovereign! for your hateful task

Is over; here your sorrows end. — Yes, here

Your happiness commences.

ALTOUM.

You say well.

Our heart with bliss unspeakable exults.

But see, our daughter faints! help! instant help!

(*TURANDOT falls back fainting on her throne, and at the same moment, a loud crash of music is heard.*)

ZELIMA (*to Turandot.*)

Look up, my Princess! and console yourself.

The dear young Prince is saved. Ah! she revives.

ADELMA (*aside.*)

Yes, he has triumphed! but is lost to me!

Yet perhaps not wholly so. — Still let me cling

To hope, still dream of love and happiness!

(*ALTOUM elated with joy, and attended by PANTALON and TARTAGLIA, has descended from his throne, and embraced the Prince. The portals leading from the Imperial apartments, are thrown open, and a large concourse of people appear rejoicing and huzzaing.*)

ALTOUM (*addressing the Princess.*)

Arouse thee, o my daughter! thou wouldest not
Be cruel still! — still make me miserable!
I know thou wouldest not. Since the dreadful law
Is now fulfilled, farewell to sadness. Prince!
We hail thee with a true parental joy,
As our beloved son in law. (*TURANDOT rises on her throne*)

TURANDOT.

Yet stop!

An instant stop! He may not wed me yet.
My questions were too easy: he must still
Answer three others in the council-hall,
I was perplexed, and had not time enough
To recollect more difficult ones.

ALTOUM.

No, no,

Accursed child! no other chance we'll give thee.
Hope not to win us by more artfulness.
In every point our edict is fulfilled,
As all our council can attest; then speak,
Ye wise, and loyal nobles, is't not so?

PANTALON (*to TURANDOT.*)

Imperial madam! we have had enough
Of riddles, and have no design to see
More heads chopped off. There stands your Princely lover,
He well deserves your Highness. You are his,
By every law divine and human. Say,
My friend Tartaglia, vizier of the court,
What thinks your lordship?

TARTAGLIA.

That the law's fulfilled,
Even to the veriest scruple. What say you,
Most learned doctors?

DOCTORS.

That the law's fulfilled,
And that the Imperial edict is become
A nullity.

ALTOUM.

Why forward then, my subjects!
Straight to the temple: there —

TURANDOT (*interrupting him.*)

Dear father! respite!

I implore it by the Gods!

ALTOUM.

No more delay!

Too long — too fatally, thou cruel girl!
Have we indulged thy wishes; but at length,
We have passed judgment. 'Tis attested by
The royal blood of ten young Princes; therefore
No longer will we yield to thy intreaties;
For by great Fohi's glorious head, we swear —

(*TURANDOT throws herself at his feet.*)

TURANDOT.]

Oh! grant me but one day, my father!

ALTOUM.

No;

No longer will we listen. To the temple!

TURANDOT (*still kneeling.*)

And if unto the temple, then the grave.

I cannot, may not, will not, be his wife.

CALAF.

Inexorable lady! cruel fair!

Who can withstand those pearly tears? who bear
Unmoved, the sight of beauty in distress?

(*to ALTOUM*) Pardon me, sire, that I implore permission

To leave the hall, and beg your Majesty

To give the Princess Turandot the respite

She has so earnestly entreated. Ah!

What can I know of happiness, if she

Still hate me? No, my passion's too devoted;

For surely ne'er did suitor feel a love

So deep as mine. Sweet Princess! could you see

My true-heart's core, you would no longer thirst

For my poor life; but if you do, behold,
I am your willing victim. Then renew
The sanguinary trial, if you will.
Without you, death to me would be a blessing.

ALTOUM.

No; to the temple — *(to TURANDOT)* nothing you can urge
Shall now avail. Yield not a point, my Prince.

TURANDOT *(rising.)*

Yes, to the temple, and the sacred altar.
Your daughter yet will shew you how to die.

(She takes a dagger from her girdle.)

CALAF.

Die! righteous Gods! O, deign to hear me sire!
Permit that I, in turn, one question put,
Which, on the morrow, if she answer not,
Then let my love be blessed: but if she solve
It's meaning, let me lose my head.

TURANDOT.

Content.

ALTOUM.

But *we* are *not* content: our will shall be
Strictly obeyed.

CALAF *(falling at the Emperor's feet.)*

Most puissant Emperor!
Grant this my humble prayer! consent to save
Your daughter's life; and if it be a crime
To do so, be the blame on me alone.
Let her be free, and revel in my blood,
If she can solve my secret.

ALTOUM.

Rash young Prince!

You know not what you ask. Her fertile mind
May soon detect that secret; but we yield
To your request. If she should solve your question,
To morrow's Sun another death must witness,
Unless you should repent you of your offer.
We hope you will. Reflect then, ere too late.
Too much of blood has flowed. What's your resolve?

CALAF.

To put the question, and abide the answer.

ALTOUM.

Then be it so; your blood be on your head.

TURANDOT.

Propound your question. I am all attention.

(CALAF rises and speaks.)

What is the name of that unhappy Prince,
Who through adversity, was long compelled
To earn his daily bread by manual toil? *(a)*
And who, even still, is as oppressed by Fate,
As he who stands before your Highness' throne,
And courts his death, if he may not obtain
The Goddess of his heart's idolatry?

TURANDOT.

To morrow will I answer you: 'till then,
Farewell!

CALAF *(throwing himself on his knees at the foot of her throne.)*
Farewell! may all good spirits guard you!

ALTOUM.

Too generous Prince! arise and follow us.
Thou hast so tempted Fortune, that we fear
She will forsake, and leave thee to despair.
Now for the banquet! Come, thou noble youth!
And drink unto thy lady-love; while we
Will pledge to thee our friendship — our affection.

(The march recommences. Then exeunt ALTOUM, CALAF, PANTALON, TARTAGLIA, the DOCTORS, soldiers, tumblers, &c. to the Emperor's apartments; and TURANEOT, ADELMA, ZELIMA, the other ladies, TRUFALDIN and his blacks, to the Harem!)

END OF SECOND ACT.

ACT III. — SCENE I.

Apartments in the Seraglio.

ADELMA, sola.

ADELMA.

Yes, now or never must I break my bonds.
 Five years within my breast have I concealed
 My hate against these tyrants, who have swept
 My family and name away, and kept me
 But as their abject slave! In these blue veins
 Blood full as royal as their own, still runs,
 Still animates my indignant soul to vengeance.
 Must I, born to a throne, succumb? and bend
 The knee to the destroyers of my race?
 'Tis surely time to throw my mask aside.
 But first must I my deepest craft employ
 To rid me of this odious servitude.
 A chance presents itself. O Love! assist
 My enterprise! Or I will gain the Prince
 By means legitimate, or win his secret
 By innocent deception. Turandot
 Shall ne'er be his. I see through her disguise.
 She loves! she loves! though she confess it not.
 May her fierce passion prey on, and consume, her!
 Yes, may the arrows of the urchin God
 Smite her, as they have smitten me! No more
 Of peace, fair tigress of the East, can now
 Be thine. — She comes!

(TURANDOT and ZELIMA appear in the back ground.)

Impelled by shame, she wavers,
And doubtful seems the strife 'twixt love and pride.
Yes, they approach; they hold discourse together. —
I, that am but a wretched slave, cannot
Sink lower in opinion: — so I'll listen.

TURANDOT.

Advise me! help me! Zelima! I dare not
Confess I love him; for the very thought
Is worse than death.

ZELIMA.

Is't possible a Prince
So handsome, young accomplished, noble, brave —
In every sense so worthy of your love,
Should be rejected by your highness?

TURANDOT.

In
The grand divan he overcame, and rendered
Me and my vaunted wisdom nought. The nations
Will now deride me for my overthrow.
But not for these; No, not for these most deep
Humiliations, do I steel my soul
Against his charms and manifest virtues. Can,
And will you, keep a secret?

ZELIMA.

On my life,
Although like you, a woman, I both *can*,
And *will*.

TURANDOT.

Then listen. You well knew
The sage Dinarbus; he who, in my youth,
Was chosen by the council, as my Tutor,
And who, i'the after time, embarking for
A neighbouring island, on an embassy
For my Imperial father, sailed away,
And ne'er was heard of more?

ZELIMA.

Yes! it was thought
The good old man, with all his suite, had been
Attacked and slain by Pirates. What of him?

TURANDOT.
Resolved to shun, and to forswear, that sex
Who lord it o'er poor woman, I consulted
Dinarbus. He attempted uselessly
To laugh me from my purpose. Afterwards,
By dint of tears and threats, I wrought on him
To indite on parchment a most solemn vow
By me before made verbally, that I
Would ne'er wed mortal man! This first point gained,
I went a wide step further, by commanding,
On pain of my displeasure, and the loss
Of his most venerable head, that he
Administered to me a certain oath.

ZELIMA.
To what effect?

TURANDOT.
That I would ever keep
My vow inviolate. The sage resisted;
But finally believing that his life
Would pay the forfeit of his disobedience,
Though, in all truth, ne'er so intended I,
He, in an evil hour, wrote down the oath.
I signed it in his presence, and invoked
Our nation's Gods to witness it.

ZELIMA.
Alas!
Most fatal oath!

TURANDOT.
Yes, Zelima, 'twas this,
And this alone. that caused me to persuade
My sire to pass the edict, which has sullied
My maiden-virtues, and pronounced me as

"The tigress hearted," though my gentler nature
Had prompted me to sacrifice myself
A thousand times, ere cause the death of those
Who sought my love; but that my dreadful oath
Forbade. The world esteems me sanguinary,
Cruel, and heartless. Ah! it knows me not.
I may not publicly confess my oath,
Because that vowed I also to keep secret
From my dear Father. Thus, on every side,
Where'er I turn, there's nought but fell despair!

ZELIMA.

Unhappy Lady!

TURANDOT.

My weak heart is lost
To the endearing virtues of this Prince,
Yet must I strive to hate him, and decline
A marriage that would sink my soul in sin,
And shut me, like a Peri, out from Heaven.
Assist me then his secret to detect.

"What is the name of that unhappy Prince,
"Who, through adversity, was long compelled
"To earn his daily bread by manual labour?
"And who, even still, is as oppressed by fate,
"As he who stands before your highness' throne,
"And courts his death, if he may not obtain
"The Goddess of his heart's idolatry?"
Thus ran the riddle?

ZELIMA.

Even word for word.

TURANDOT.

That this must mean himself, is plain; but how
Can I his name and family discover?

ZELIMA.

That is a question difficult to solve.
But wherefore should your Highness so regard
An oath now proved revolting to your nature?

Woman was born to love, and be beloved.
 Your oath, as being unnatural, is not binding.
 When the young Prince before your presence stood,
 How modest was his bearing! how he bowed
 His bold heart to your wish, against his own!
 How prayed he for you at your father's feet,
 That as you felt no pity for his love,
 Another chance against his life be granted!

TURANDOT.

I own he's all perfection; young, yet wise;
 Gentle, and brave, and beautiful. I own
 He has surprised, and won my heart; but then
 My oath's recorded mortal ne'er to wed,
 And he, though God-like, is a *mortal* still.
 Then, for your logic, 'tis sophistical.
 An oath's *an oath*, and if once broken, hurls
 The breaker to perdition.

ZELIMA.

Think not so.

'Tis said the Gods but smile at broken vows
 In *Love's* false calendar. I see, my Princess,
 You are much moved. The tear drop's in your eye
 You cannot quite forget humanity.
 Ne'er have I seen you look so fair before,
 Nor half so interesting. Ah! relent,
 And break a flimsy oath, to gain a husband.

TURANDOT.

It may not be; and therefore, tho' my heart
 Almost persuades me that this gallant Prince
 Forms an exception to a general rule,
 In so far as he differs from the rest
 Of his detested sex, yet, to regain
 My *heart's ease*, I must class him with the herd
 Of tyrants, inasmuch as he's — *a man*!
 You can't deny the fact.

ZELIMA (*archly.*)

Oh! no; so far

I must admit his great *delinquency*!

TURANDOT.

Go to! you mock me. — As a *man*, I hate him.

Man is perfidious ever. For his love,

'Tis chiefly wasted on himself; and what

He spares to *woman*, he spares niggardly,

Dividing it among the many; losing

His heart today, recovering it to morrow,

And then again surrendering it, at sight,

To some new mistress with not half the charms,

Perchance, of her preceding rivals! then

Forsaking her, in turn, for others, merely

In search of novelty! and lastly, wishing

All women were concentrated in *one*

Angellic creature, that he might, in *her*,

Make love to *all the world!!!* yes, this is *man*,

Pitiless, heartless, reckless, faithless — *man*!

Woman alone can feel what true love is:

But truce to further parlance. On the morrow

I must this riddle solve, or worse than death

Will follow. This young stranger is a *man*;

Therefore I ought to hate him; I have sworn

An oath; and therefore may not marry him.

ZELIMA.

My dearest mistress! cast such thoughts aside,

And act like other folks. Your time is come.

Your heart is captive, so you are not free

To keep your oath, as formerly. Then take

To your fair arms this paragon and pride

Of Princes and of mortals. Have compassion

On him, and on yourself.

(ADELMA comes forward.)

ADELMA.

Unwillingly

Have I o'erheard some part of your discourse,
 Those who are not of royal race descended,
 Would speak as gentle Zelima has spoken.
 A queenly heart will feel as feels a queen.
 Dear Zelima! forgive me. Not for thee
 Should be the office to correct our mistress,
 What! shall she wed an unknown beggar-boy,
 Whose impudence alone has hitherto
 Supported and upheld him? Marked you not
 With what a reckless bearing he replied
 To her three questions? just as if they were
 But children's riddles! Then his speaking eye,
 That scanned her Highness o'er from top to toe,
 Proclaimed, with matchless impudence, his thoughts,
 As much as to say — "*I love, and I will have you.*"
 Yes, I observed too well it's flash of triumph,
 And could have sunk into the earth for shame.
 I love my mistress, therefore honor her;
 But she would forfeit the whole world's respect,
 If she consented to be his.

TURANDOT.

Adelma!

Your words are just.

ZELIMA (*ironically.*)

Ne'er knew I until now,

'Twas such a grand misfortune to become —
 A wife!

ADELMA.

Be silent Zelima; your thoughts
 Are suited to your humble birth, while ours
 Take nobler flight, and soar above the clouds
 That dim the common gaze. Is't not enough
 That to the men we should yield up our hearts?
 Must they be Lords and master's too? as well
 As lovers? Must poor woman bear, and forbear?
 Dress, dance, sing, talk, look, feel, and, in a word,

Do every thing she can to please vain man?
Yet be for ever ruled by him? and taught
To conjugate that odious verb "*obey*?"

TURANDOT.

The Gods forbid I e'er should *practise* it!

ADELMA.

Dear Madam! hard indeed must be your fate,
If you discover not the Prince's secret.

You surely cannot love him. Judging by
Myself, it is impossible. He is

A swaggering braggart, — a rare masterpiece
Of pride and insolence! and though so young,
A practised veteran in Love's wily arts!

He'd gain a wealthy Heiress for his booty,
Well knowing that the town is worth the siege.

If he once take it, think you he'll forego
The rights of conquest? No, he will assert

The tyrant-man's prerogative, and rule it,
As with a rod of iron.

TURANDOT (*much agitated.*)

Should I fail

To ascertain his name, my dagger's point

Shall rid me of my life.

ADELMA.

Fear not, dear lady!

Or force, or cunning, shall disclose it.

ZELIMA.

If

You be a witch, Adelma — for myself,
I don't profess to be so — solve the riddle.

TURANDOT.

My kind Adelma! help and counsel me!

I know him not; nor can my wit suggest

How I his name and family may trace.

ADELMA.

Let me reflect! Oh! now I think upon it,

The Prince declared in the Divan, that one
In Pekin knows his name and quality.
That person must we seek throughout the city;
Nor spare our purse-strings to discover.

TURANDOT.

Yes,

No price can be too great to find such person.

ADELMA.

You Zelima, may help us in our search.

ZELIMA.

What! I?

ADEMLA.

Yes, you. Pray did you not acquaint me
Your sister but this morning called on you,
And said her husband Hassan knew the Prince?
And honored him as master? and as friend?

ZELIMA.

I readily admit it; but his name
And parentage I know not; nor did she.
These are a riddle still to both.

TURANDOT.

For-shame!

How dare you thus deny an evident fact?
Out with the truth! here's money for your secret.
If you divulge it not, your punishment
Shall be severe and instant.

ZELIMA.

I have told

Nought but the truth. My sister did indeed
Hint, that she meant to persecute her spouse,
I'the hope to obtain his secret, though she owned
Success was more than doubtful. Do I merit
Such treatment from my mistress, as to have
My truth and my fidelity suspected?
As for your gold, pray keep it, mighty Princess!
Even if I knew the secret, ne'er would I

Betray it, to deliver up a Prince
So all accomplished, to the grasp of death.
Perhaps you'll say I love him! Be it so.
So call my just compassion if you choose.
Hassan alone the secret knows; and he,
Unless I much mistake his character,
Will keep it closely. (*Exit ZELIMA.*)

TURANDOT.

Gentle Zelima!
Stay, and forgive your friend!

ADELMA.

Even let her go.
Her rage has only helped us on our route
To the much-wished-for goal! 'Tis now for us
To follow up the opening she has made.
'Twere folly to suppose the noble Hassan
Would tell his secret willingly; but craft
May gain it from him; or if that should fail,
Force must extract it. Let this man be brought
Into the Harem. Once within our power,
My life on't, madam, we may coax from him,
Or purchase, or extort, no matter which,
The secret, whose possession would restore you
To happiness, — to freedom — to yourself.
My honored mistress! Where are all your blacks?
May I give orders in your name, that they
Bring Hassan to the Harem?

TURANDOT (*falling on her neck.*)

Best of friends!
You may believe me, I would life forego
Ere my proud suitor should possess my person.

ADELMA.

Then by your Highness' leave, I will secure
That of this self-same Hassan.

TURANDOT.

You may do

Just what you please. I will confirm your acts.
This signet-ring is your authority. *(Exit.)*

ADELMA *(sola.)*

O mighty love assist and bless my purpose!
Guide me to cast these odious bonds away!
The pride and cruelty of Turandot
At length have opened me a path to freedom.
Far more than mortal tongue can utter; or
Woman's imagination well conceive,
Do I detest her; yet must I pretend
To love and honor her! Oh! pardon, Gods!
That I thus play the hypocrite, to hide
The honest feelings of my wounded soul! *(Exit ADELMA)*

ACT III. — SCENE II.

(Hall in front of the palace.)

Enter CALAF and BARAK in conversation.

CALAF.

There's none within the precincts of the city,
Can know the secret, save yourself alone.
Full far away my father's kingdom lies.
For five long years has it been lost to us.
Meantime my royal parents and myself
Have lived concealed; and rumour's busy tongue,
That late pronounced us dead, has even ceased
To mention us! Ah! Barak! Noble Barak!
The unfortunate by an ungrateful world
Are soon forgotten.

BARAK.

Pardon me, my Prince!

Your Highness has not acted warily.
The child of dark adversity, should fear
Moral impossibilities; should think
The very stones around his path may rise
Against him; ay, that walls have ears! may first
Betray, and then, fall on, and bury him
Amid their ruins; that wild fancy's dreams
May soon be changed to sad realities.
Your noble nature has immersed your Highness
In a fresh sea of doubt and danger. All
Yes, *all* was gained! The Princess was your own,
The brightest hopes were budding o'er your head.
A mighty empire waited on your nod;
And yet a wily maiden's tears have wrought
Upon your tenderness, and dashed aside
The cup of joy and triumph from your lip,
Ere you had sipped a single drop of it!

CALAF.

Oh! had you seen her grief! — her wild despair!

BARAK.

Think on your wretched parents now at Berlas,
And give not all your pity to a siren,
Who would destroy you.

CALAF.

Ah! chide not my love.
The Princess may appreciate, and feel
Grateful hereafter, for the boon I granted.

BARAK.

What! gratitude from her! Expect it not.

CALAF.

She cannot now escape me; for to solve
My question is beyond her art. You are,
Of course, too honest to throw out a hint
That might your master injure. This I know.
But have you told the secret to your wife?

BARAK.

Not I, my Prince; your servant may reprove;
But never would betray you.

CALAF.

It is well.

(Enter PANTALON, TARTAGLIA, and BRIGELLA with soldiers.)

PANTALON.

See, there he is: What brings your Highness here?

(discovering BARAK.)

And who's the man you have been talking with.

BARAK (aside.)

How will this end?

TARTAGLIA.

Say Prince, who is this man?

CALAF.

This man? I met him by mere accident,
And asked him of the town and its extent.
Vizier you have your answer.

TARTAGLIA.

Gracious sir,

You are too noble, and by far too good
For this false world. What demon could have urged you
To loose the fair bird your bold hand had caged?

PANTALON.

Do not thus question him. What's done, *is done*.
Young Prince! we all admire, and pray for you.

(to BARAK.)

But as for you, sir exile! we would fain
Dispense with your attendance here. We have
Some business with the Prince. Wil't please your Highness
Just step within the palace-hall? A guard
Of honor shall accompany you thither.
The Emperor commands you sleep to night
Protected by a band of trusty soldiers. —

(aside.)

Brigella, you will do your duty, sir.

Let none speak to him. Such, you are aware,
Are the strict orders of his Majesty.

(Aside to CALAF.)

Divulge your name to none, unless you wish
To tell it to old Pantalon. He'll not
Betray the trust. Just whisper it, and he
Will thank you heartily.

CALAF.

Old man! old man!
The Emperor would not approve this conduct.

PANTALON.

Sir, be not angry. I would keep the secret.

BRIGELLA *(aside to CALAF.)*

Prince! would you deign impart to me your name,
'Twould save you infinite trouble.

CALAF.

Peace!

PANTALON *(to BRIGELLA.)*

I guess

What means your whispering. Take especial care
You do not lose your head sir, in exchange
For so much idle curiosity.

BRIGELLA.

If I lose mine, in such a cause, your own
Should bear it company; for I can guess
Your meaning, just as well.

TARTAGLIA.

Oh! how they long
To know his Highness' secret! — As for me,
I would not ask it. *(whispers CALAF.)* But if you, my Prince,
Should wish to tell it me, you may depend
Upon my silence.

CALAF.

I'll not trouble you,
At present, on the subject! but to morrow
Not only you, but all the world may know it.

TARTAGLIA.

Well! Heaven protect your Highness! *(Exit.)*

PANTALON.

So say I. *(Exit.)*

BRIGELLA.

Come, will your Highness now accompany
Your slave?

CALAF.

Lead on. I'll follow you. *(to BARAK.)*

Sir stranger,

Farewell!

BARAK.

Good youth! your country's Gods protect you!

(Aside to CALAF.)

Ever your faithful and devoted slave.

BRIGELLA.

Open your ranks, my soldiers, to receive
And guard this noble Prince.*(The soldiers surround CALAF; and place him in the midst
of them.)*

BRIGELLA.

Now forward! forward!

*(The soldiers march towards the Palace. As they are going
off the stage, enter TIMUR on the other side, in beggar's
apparel.)*

BARAK.

O heaven! preserve the Prince, I was confused;
But luckily his Highness played his part
Most ably.*(TIMUR crosses the stage.)*

TIMUR.

O my son! my only son!
The soldiers bear him hence! He goes to death!
The tyrant-Khan of Teflis, who has robbed me
Of my fair kingdom, doubtless has at length
Discovered, and just seized on him. Alas!
And must I lose him thus? O Calaf! Calaf!BARAK. *(Running to him, and pointing a dagger at his breast.)*
Another word. and thou shalt die the death

Of a false traitor! Who art thou, old man,
That thus proclaimest a name too sacred far
To be divulged to common ears?

TIMUR.

Whom see I?

Is it not Barak? Thou in Pekin! Thou
Betray thy Prince! and point thy murderous dagger
With rebel-hand against thy King!

(BARAK drops the dagger in astonishment.)

BARAK.

Great Gods!

Can it be possible? The royal Timur!

TIMUR.

Yes, traitor! yes; I am that wretched monarch,
Now both by thee and all the world deserted.
Why dost thou hesitate to take my life?

I freely offer it. 'Twill buy for thee

A place of honor with the Khan of Teflis.

Come! take it then; 'tis hateful to me since

An old and trusty servant, whom I loved,

Turns traitor to his sovereign, and death

Awaits my only son.

BARAK.

O ye just Gods!

It is my king! my own loved, gracious master!

Illustrious sir! forgive the indignity,

Which, knowing not your sacred person, I

Presumed to offer you. Love for the Prince

Impelled me to the hasty act! and sire!

If you would guard his life, let not the name

Of Calaf pass your lips; nor call me Barak

My name is Hassan now. I do conjure

Your majesty to bear in mind this caution.

But deign to tell your ever faithful slave,

If his good queen, the royal Elmage, live

TIMUR.

Still my own own loyal Barak. In these arms,

These widowed arms, she lately died at Berlas,
Wretched and broken hearted.

BARAK. To be divulged to common eyes?

Hapless queen!

TIMUR.

In the cold tomb I laid her dear remains,
And longed to join her; but it would not be.
Berlas to me was now a wilderness;
For all my hopes lay buried in the grave
Of my illustrious and beloved consort.
I could not bear to stay all lonely there;
So fled the hateful place. From town to town,
While on my route, I traced my wandering son,
And providence at length directed me
To find him here, apparently to witness
His death.

BARAK.

My liege! fear not for him. Tomorrow,
If fickle fortune cheat him not, he'll be
The happiest youth throughout the eastern world.
But once more I remind your majesty,
Let not his name escape you; and remember
That *mine* is *Hassan*.

TIMUR.

Wherefore!

BARAK.

This is not

A time, or place, for explanation, Sire!
Vouchsafe to visit my abode.

Enter (SKIRINA.)

Dear wife!

Whence come you!

SKIRINA.

From the Princess' harem. There.

I gathered from my sister that the Prince
Had solved the Princess' riddles; so at length
It seems, fair Turandot must be a bride!
This news was truly grateful to my ears.

BARAK.

No doubt, beloved Skirina. You of course
Have not informed your sister that the Prince
Was ever known to me?

SKIRINA.

Indeed I have.

I made no secret of it in the Harem;
And should have doubtless told his name to all,
Had I but known it.

BARAK (*to TIMUR.*)

Stranger! We are lost!
We must away, and fly the city walls.

TIMUR.

But tell me man your reason.

BARAK.

There's no time

For anything but flight.

(*TRUFALDIN appears in the back ground with his blacks.*)

Whom see I there?

Trufaldin and his myrmidons? Alas!
It is too late! the cruel messengers
Of the more cruel Turandot, approach.

(*The blacks advance.*)

O thoughtless woman! thy too busy tongue
Has ruined all! I cannot now escape.
'Tis I they seek. Oh! hasten to our home,
And save thyself and this most reverend man.

TIMUR.

But why?

BARAK.

Again must I entreat of you
To ask no questions. Fly, or you are lost!

SKIRINA.

The stranger's question is but natural.
Why not explain?

BARAK.

I may not. In the name

Of heaven, begone! *(to Timur)* Respected sir, once more
 I do implore you to conceal your name,
 And that of him we spoke of. If you do,
 All may end happily. Begone! Begone!
*(TRUFALDIN and his blacks suddenly surround them. TRUFALDIN
 places a dagger at BARAK's breast.)*

TRUFALDIN.

Stir not from hence without my orders; who
 Attempts it, will repent it sorely!

SKIRINA.

Ah!

I know they seek my Hassan.

BARAK.

He is here,

And ready to attend them.

TRUFALDIN.

You say well.

A cheerful acquiescence with my will,
 Has ever far more weight with me, than frowns
 And disobedience. To the Harem sir!

BARAK.

Let's on then.

TRUFALDIN.

Softly; first a word or two.

Who is this woman? who this aged man?

BARAK.

As for the first, I know her not: the last
 Is but a beggar.

TRUFALDIN.

Oh! a beggar, is he?

He may as well then go with us, and get
 Some alms to buy his dinner. I repeat,
 Who is this woman?

BARAK.

Wherefore do you thus

Presume to question me? I tell you frankly
 I know her not.

TRUFALDIN.

What! will you dare deny
All knowledge of your wife? I recollect her;
For often has she visited the harem,
To see her sister Zelima. For-shame!
Deny your better half! If I where she,
I'd box your ears for your impertinence.
Slaves! do your office. Take in custody
These three suspicious persons. Let them not
Attempt to speak to any living soul.
At nightfall, bring them to the Princess.

TIMUR.

Gods!

What new misfortune now awaits me!

SKIRINA.

Yes,

And me! and you, my dearest husband.

BARAK.

Wife!

Keep but thy tongue within thy teeth, and still
We may avoid destruction.

SKIRINA.

Mercy heaven!

BARAK.

Do you have mercy on yourself, and us;
And be less talkative. The righteous Gods
Protect you, and this venerable man!

TRUFALDIN *(to the Blacks.)*

Away with them! On for the harem! March!

(TRUFALDIN and his blacks march their Prisoners off the stage.)

END OF THIRD ACT.

ACT IV. — SCENE I.

Grand hall in the Harem. In the midst is a table, on which is a basin filled with gold. TIMUR and BARAK are standing beside a pillar surrounded by black slaves, kneeling, and armed with sabres and daggers. ZELIMA and SKIRINA stand weeping on one side of the hall, and TURANDOT is seated on the other.

TURANDOT.

There yet is time for mercy. Take the gold;
Divulge the Prince's name, or die. Ye slaves!
Lift your keen daggers. At my signal strike!

(The slaves lift their daggers.)

BARAK *(to SKIRINA.)*

What mischief hast thou brought on us! *(to the Princess)* Fulfil
Your purpose. I defy your malice. Slaves!
Torture, stab, murder me! I can but die. —

(to the Princess)

Tigress 'tis true! I know the Prince's name;
But neither prayers nor tears shall gain my secret.
Keep then, your gold. It is as nought, compared
With faith and loyalty. Weep not for me,
Beloved wife; but urge the cruel Princess
To pity for the honor of her sex,
This ancient man, whose only fault consists
In knowing me.

SKIRINA.

Imperial Turandot!

Be merciful.

TIMUR.

Plead not, fair lady, for
A poor old man, on whom the Gods still vent
Their heavy anger. — Life is now to me
But the mere shadow of the past — not worth
Retaining. *(To BARAK.)* I will save thee, friend, then die.
(To TURANDOT.)
Know then thou cruel —

BARAK.

Name him not.

TURANDOT *(eagerly.)*

Old man!

Thou know's him then!

TIMUR.

I cannot stoop to falsehood.
Your Highness guesses rightly. For his birth
'Tis truly royal and his name is. —

BARAK *(interrupting him.)*

Hold!

Would you betray and slay him?

TURANDOT.

Reverend man!

He would alarm thee needlessly! Quick slaves!
Prepare your daggers for this traitor Hassan.

SKIRINA.

Save him, just heaven! my husband! O my husband!

BARAK.

He is resigned. Even let her do her worst.

TIMUR.

Hold, hold, thou cruel maid! Swear by thy Gods
That thou wilt spare this honorable man,
And thou shalt know the truth.

TURANDOT.

By all my Gods!

I swear that neither he nor thou shall die.
If thou'lt discover the secret.

BARAK.

Ah! think not
To gain it thus. If you will further swear
The Prince shall be your husband, and not fall
By the executioners sword, we'll tell you all.

TIMUR.

Why these demands? Clear up my doubts, ye Gods!

TURANDOT.

I'll wait no longer (*to the slaves*) once more raise your daggers!

SKIRINA.

Have mercy, Princess!

(*The slaves are about to stab BARAK and TIMUR, and only wait for the Princess' signal.*)

BARAK.

Cease thy vain appeal.

The "*tigress*" thirsts for her accustomed blood.

TIMUR.

My son! for thee resignedly I die;

Thy mother's gone before; I follow.

TURANDOT.

What!

Thy son! — Poor beggar! art thou then a king,

In this disguise? and father to the Prince?

TIMUR.

I am.

BARAK.

My liege! My liege! what have you done?

SKIRINA.

A monarch, yet so wretched! In these rags,

And yet a king! a beggar, yet his father!

TURANDOT.

I am o'ercome with wonder. Royal sir!

Fain would I hate thy son. — Alas! I *cannot*.

My woman's heart is scorched by raging fires,

"A Prince compelled to earn his daily bread

"By manual toil." Said he not so? O fate!

"O destiny!"

BARAK.

Yes, you behold in him
A king; then spare his sacred person. If
You still persist to slay him; — if compassion
Touch not your heart, yet think upon the shame
To which the act will sink you; — think upon
The grey-hairs of your own Imperial father,
And honor them in this his brother-monarch.
Enough to kill the son by your unkindness;
Have pity on the father, or the Gods
Will ne'er forgive you.

ZELIMA.

You are moved, my Princess.
Oh! give your pity and compassion room,
And end at once this anguish and suspense.

(Enter ADELMA.)

TURANDOT.

Thou comest in happy time, Adelma. Give me
Thy counsel. My astonishment exceeds
All common bounds! This is the Prince's father!

ADELMA.

Is't possible? Off with them both! and take
This gold away. The Emperor comes!

TURANDOT.

My father!

ADELMA.

Yes; — haste, or we are ruined. Slaves! remove
This old man and his friend into the vaults,
And there detain them until further orders.

(To TURANDOT.)

Since force has hitherto failed, we must resort
To fraud. I have a scheme, that must succeed.
Skirina, Zelima! remain you here.
You may be shortly wanted.

BARAK *(to TIMUR.)*

Ah! my liege!

The Gods alone can know what ills await us.
Wife! sister! fare you well!

TIMUR.

On me alone
Inflict thy vengeance; but oh! spare my friend!
And save my son.

BARAK.

Sire! you but speak in vain.
Thy son's betrayed; and as for us, dread night
Will hide us from the busy world. They bear us
Far from the sight of men, where ray of light
Ne'er faintly pierces, where our lamentations
No human ear can reach. *(To the Princess.)*

Yes, Turandot,
Thou may'st from mortals hide us; but the Gods
Will see and punish, thy misdeeds.

TURANDOT *(to the slaves.)*

Away

With your two prisoners instantly; but treat them
With every mark of courtesy and kindness.
*(The blacks retire with TIMUR and BARAK, and at the same
time, remove the table and basin. Exeunt TURANDOT, ADELMA
on the opposite side. SKIRINA and ZELIMA the two latter
weeping.)*

ACT IV. — SCENE II.

A room in the Princess' harem.

Enter TURANDOT, ADELMA, SKIRINA and ZELIMA.

TURANDOT.

Dearest Adelma, best, nay, only friend,
On you I rest my hopes. Explain your scheme
To baulk this odious marriage.

ADELMA.

Know, then madame,
By golden bribes I have just gained the guard

Appointed by the Emperor's care to watch
The entrance of the Prince's chamber; and
Could we but at the instant send to him
Some trusty messenger, or two, you might
Obtain your object. — Zelima! Skirina!
You could assist us. Will you do so? Ah!
There only doubt commences. The young Prince
Would not suspect you.

TURANDOT.

If they should refuse,
Then Hassan dies.

SKIRINA.

Save but his valued life,
And I will do your bidding.

TURANDOT.

Zelima!

The same condition do I offer thee.

ZELIMA.

Spare but his life; and I will do my best
To execute your orders.

TURANDOT.

It is well.

ADELMA (*To SKIRINA and ZELIMA.*)

Then come with me; we should not lose a moment.

(*Exeunt ADELMA, followed by SKIRINA and ZELIMA.*)

TURANDOT (*sola.*)

May the just Gods assist her! If I gain
The victory, my name will be renowned,
Even still more than ever for my wit.
But what is this poor honor, when contrasted
With the fierce pangs of disappointed love?
What though I shame my Princely wooer, still,
His star rides in the ascendant, o'er my heart. —
In my mind's eye, I see him at my feet;
My melting soul would yield; but then my oath
Impels me to a deed, I shudder at.
If he again be conqueror, despair

Is my sole portion. Yes, Adelma's right —
 Having already gone so far, retreat
 Is now impossible. The Prince must fall,
 Or I must marry him, and break an oath,
 Which broken, would consign me to perdition.

(Enter ALTOUM, followed by PANTALON and TARTAGLIA.

ALTOUM is reading a letter, apparently in deep thought.)

ALTOUM (aside.)

And so the Khan of Teflis, who usurped
 The throne of royal Timur, is defunct.
 Prince Calaf too, an exiled wanderer,
 Has come, it seems, to Pekin, and adventured
 In a most desperate cause, which hitherto,
 He has sustained right-manfully. Thus fate.
 By indirect, and crooked courses, shews
 How shine the Gods in this vain world's affairs.

(PANTALON aside to TARTAGLIA.)

PANTALON.

The Emperor doats! why talks he to himself?

TARTAGLIA.

Hush! hush! A messenger is just arrived
 From far-off lands; but no one knows, as yet,
 Except his majesty, the news he's brought.

ALTOUM (to TURANDOT.)

The hour approaches, daughter, when you must
 Correctly answer this young Prince's question,
 Or take him for your wedded-lord. All chance
 Of solving it, being hopeless quite, you should,
 Give up the point with a becoming grace,
 And make a virtue of necessity.
 Although to you the secret is unknown,
 I, without trouble, have discovered it;
 But may not honestly impart it to you.

TURANDOT.

Has he then told your majesty?

ALTOUM.

Not so.

I hold a letter, wherein stand the names
 Of the young Prince and his illustrious Sire,
 With all concerning them. A messenger
 From foreign shores has brought the grateful tidings,
 Whom, 'till tomorrow, I shall keep concealed.
 Your unknown lover is, in truth, a Prince; —
 Yet ne'er can you discover him. His country
 Lies far away: Its very name indeed,
 Is scarcely known to us. Your hope to guess it,
 Is worse than vain — must end in your disgrace.
 And therefore come I to my only child,
 To caution, and, I trust, prevail on her,
 Not to incur the public ridicule,
 By clinging to that hope; but to submit
 To stubborn fate. *(To PANTALON and TARTAGLIA.)*
 Leave us alone together.

(Exeunt PANTALON and TARTAGLIA.)
 Daughter! I come to save your honor.

TURANDOT.

Father!

I can protect it, as becomes your child,
 Before the whole Divan.

ALTOUM.

It cannot be.

I read within your eyes your shame and anguish.
 I am your father, and even love you still,
 With true parental fondness. We are now
 Alone; unlock your heart, my Turandot,
 And tell me if you know his name?

TURANDOT.

To morrow,

In the Divan I will pronounce it.

ALTOUM.

No;

You but deceive yourself. If not, disclose it,
 That I may caution him in time, to fly

And save a life to honor dear. 'Tis
But little that I ask of you, my child!
You'll not refuse it to your only parent?

TURANDOT.

Whether, as yet, I know his name, is not
Important; but to morrow, sire, I shall;
And cannot fail to do so. Let him then
Wisely depart in season. This is all
I now may say to my dear lord and father,
Except that as, in full Divan, this Prince
Has cruelly mocked me; so will I mock him,
By proving to the council I can probe
His *wondrous* secret.

ALTOUM.

Girl! he mocked you not.
To save his life, and gain your hand, he solved
Your cunning riddles. This was all his crime.
Then lay aside your foolish pride, and let
Compassion melt your soul, even though it be
Insensible to love. Ne'er can you solve
The Prince's secret. *(Shews a letter.)*

See! I have it here.

List then to me. To morrow when you come
To the Divan, and this young unknown Prince
Appears before us, you shall instantly
Pronounce his name, and gain a victory
Over his mind, as well as heart; but then,
On the express condition, must it be,
That when you shall have cast him down so low,
You will again upraise him, and bestow
Your hand and heart upon him. What say you
To this, my child? If you will only swear
To act a generous part when you are victor,
I will acquaint you how to solve the riddle.

TURANDOT.

Father! I know not what to say or do.

ALTOUM.

Once more, remember, we are quite alone;
 And I will plight my oath not to divulge
 The means by which you solve it. So when you
 Shall thus have gained a happy victory,
 Prove your high-mindedness and gratitude,
 By giving one so worthy of your love,
 The free gift of your hand and person.
 After so much of grief and misery,
 You will not, cannot, my request deny.

TURANDOT.

Wo's me! how subtilely you argue sir!
 But shall I then forget Adelma's words?
 And slight the scheme that she proposed to me?
 Down, — down, my stubborn pride! This aching heart
 Would yield to love. I will perhaps accept
 Your offer Sire! but yet again, my oath!
 Oh no! I may not, dare not.

ALTOUM.

Child! you rave!
 What oath allude you to? What mighty scheme
 Is contemplated by your slave Adelma?
 Why ponder you? and waver thus, my daughter,
 In twofold resolution, here and there?

TURANDOT.

Too true — I raved — I knew not what I said.
 But I perceive your drift, my father! Yes;
 You have an understanding with the Prince —
 A *private understanding*. — Doubtless 'tis
 From him that you have lately learned his name.
 It is a game your majesty and he
 Are playing at my expence

ALTOUM.

Upon my honor,
 You wrong us both. Resolve at once.

TURANDOT.

I do.

ALTOUM.

To wed the Prince?

TURANDOT.

Oh no! to answer him
Before the world, in the divan tomorrow,
Unaided by your majesty or him.

ALTOUM.

Thou monster! canst thou doubt thy father's honor?

TURANDOT.

Ah! press me not for further explanation.
My resolution's formed; and never will,
Nor ever can, be changed.

ALTOUM.

Then mark me well.
When in divan the council is assembled,
High in the midst an altar shall be raised,
And on the instant that you fail to solve
The Prince's question, the attending priests
Shall join you both in holy wedlock's bonds.
You have not pitied, or obliged your father!
Live then, or die, he cares for you no more.

(Exit ALTOUM.)

TURANDOT.

Adelma! friend and comforter, where art thou?
I am deserted now by all the world!
My father has in anger parted from me;
And well he might. He knows not of my oath.
Alas! what have I done? — my oath! — my oath!

(Exit TURANDOT.)

ACT IV. — SCENE III.

(A splendid apartment, with several entrances; an oriental embroidered bed stands in the back ground. CALAF, in deep thought, is pacing the apartment, and BRIGELLA, holding a torch, is looking at him, and shaking his head.)

BRIGELLA.

My Prince! the clock has just now stricken three,
And for the thousandth time, methinks, your Highness
Has paced your chamber up and down! Forgive me;
But sleep would much refresh me; and I'm sure,
A little rest would not harm you.

CALAF.

Most true
Brigella; but my mind's diseased. If you
Will leave me for awhile, I'll try at least
To snatch some brief repose.

(BRIGELLA bows and exits; but instantly returns.)

BRIGELLA.

One word, your Highness!
Should you see any one, or any thing;
Be on your guard? I warn you! take the hint.

CALAF.

Should I see any one? What! here?

BRIGELLA.

Why not?
The Emperor's *but the Emperor* — The Princess
Is *Lady-paramount!* and what *she* orders,
Must be obeyed, on pain of death. She has
Directed that you pass not hence.

CALAF.

Indeed?

BRIGELLA.

In very deed — mistake me not. We know
That money is a very tempting thing,
And quite as much an object to your guard,
As others.

CALAF.

Will the guard then murder me?

BRIGELLA.

The Gods forbid! It was not that I meant.

All I would hint, is this. — Should *certain folks*,
From idle curiosity, just peep,
Clean through the key-hole, be upon your guard,
Poor servants are poor *rogues*. Good night, my Prince!

CALAF.

Thanks for your friendly hint — I guess its meaning;
And *will be on my guard*.

BRIGELLA (*aside.*)

You have good cause.

They'll ne'er refuse a bribe. What comforts me,
Is that I cautioned him against the danger
I dared not openly point out. Great Lama!
From harm preserve him! (*Exit BRIGELLA.*)

CALAF.

He has planted doubt
And deep anxiety, where peace and quiet
Were much required. But who would visit me
In this, my solitude? yes, who? I care not,
Be't Angel, Devil, or Man. (*Goes to a window.*)

As yet 'tis night,

And solemn darkness holds its sovereign sway.
I will no longer then distract my soul
With idle fears, or doubts; but try awhile
To drown my senses in oblivion.

(*He is about to throw himself on the bed, when a door in the
wainscot suddenly opens, and enter SKIRINA, masked, and
in man's apparel.*)

SKIRINA.

Prince!

CALAF.

Ha! who art thou? (*Putting his hand on his sword.*)

SKIRINA.

Do you not know me, Sir?

My woman's heart is beating fearfully
 Beneath my male attire. I am Skirina!
 The noble Hassan's wife, so late your Hostess;
 And here have stolen, through the guard, to seek you.
 I know not how to tell you all that's happened.
 My anguish nearly choaks me! — my weak knees
 Are tottering! and my tears so overcome me,
 That I can scarcely speak my thoughts.

CALAF.

Good lady!

Compose yourself, what do you want with me?

SKIRINA.

My husband's lost — 'twas told to Turandot
 He knew your Highness; therefore instantly
 She sent her slaves to seize, and bear him off
 A prisoner to the Harem, where long time
 She questioned him concerning you, your name
 And family; meanwhile, to ensure success,
 She offered him a bowl of gold; but he
 Would not be *bought*. On this, she threatened him
 With her deep vengeance; yet in vain. My husband
 Haughtily answered, and refused to give
 The slightest clue that could betray the secret. —
 For this his honorable conduct, Sir,
 He is to die!

CALAF.

O true, and faithful servant!

SKIRINA.

There's more to tell. Your father's in my house.

CALAF.

My father! Heavens!

SKIRINA.

Made by your mother's death,
 A recent widower.

CALAF.

Alas! my mother!

Dearest of friends! my good, my gentle mother!

SKIRINA.

Your wretched father knows that you are here.
He trembles for you, and is almost frantic.
He has insisted on a conference
With great Altoum, declaring he'll divulge
Your name and country, if I bring him not
Your signature, to prove you still exist.
For this I sought your Highness, in the hope
To appease, and gratify the aged man.

CALAF.

My father here in Pekin; and my mother
Departed for the land of souls! You mock me!

SKIRINA.

By Fohi's head, I state the truth.

CALAF.

Alas!

SKIRINA.

Your pardon — not a moment must be lost.
Wil't please you then to write your signature!

(She produces writing-tablets.)

CALAF.

Give me the tablets then; —

(He is about to write; but suddenly stops.)

But wait awhile.

Pray have you not a sister in the Harem?
Attendant on fair Turandot. Your spouse
So told me lately.

SKIRINA.

What of that?

CALAF.

Return

To my loved Father, and acquaint him with
My humble duty, that I care not what
He tells the Emperor.

SKIRINA.

Pray do not refuse

Your name is all I want.

CALAF.

I will not write it.
You, and the world may know it on the morrow
But not before, I little thought that you
Would e'er betray me.

SKIRINA.

I betray you Sir!
Think not so harshly of me. (*aside.*) Thou Adelma!
Must, in my stead, deceive him. (*aloud.*) Then my Prince!
Since you are obstinate, I may as well
Retire. Good night your Highness.

CALAF.

Madam fare you well!

SKIRINA (*aside.*)

Adelma, wake! Your victim slumbers not.

(*Exit SKIRINA.*)

CALAF (*solus.*)

Brigella truly spoke — and yet this woman
Swore that my father was at her abode
In Pekin! and my mother in the tomb! (*A door opens.*)
Who's there? Another visitor? (*Enter ZELIMA.*)

ZELIMA.

My Prince!

In me you see the friend of your beloved,
The Princess Turandot. I bring you news
That will rejoice your heart.

CALAF.

The Gods be thanked!

Will fortune then be kind to me at last?
Surely you flatter, me your lovely mistress
Is so unbending, and unkind, that none
May safely hope to work on her compassion.

ZELIMA.

I tell your Highness nothing but the fact.
'Tis you alone can make her proud soul bend.
You are the first whose love has touched her heart.

Twice she protested that she hated you,
Yet dearly loved you all the while.

CALAF.

Indeed!

That's somewhat strange! Your tidings are most welcome;
But what's their end? and upshot?

ZELIMA.

I will tell you.

But it must be — in confidence.

CALAF (*archly.*)

Of course!

ZELIMA.

The Princess Turandot at length repents
Of all her past ambition; and perceiving
It is impossible to guess your secret,
Is cruelly distressed to think upon
The shame she'll feel in the Divan tomorrow,
If you defeat her. May the ground now open
And swallow me, unless, I state the truth.

CALAF.

Pray be more sparing of your protestations.
I do not doubt you. Tell fair Turandot
That though she were to gain the victory,
She would not elevate her name so high,
As in convincing an incredulous world
Her soul is yet alive to generous feeling,
By taking pity on her faithful lover,
And gladdening her aged father's heart.
Are these the only tidings, you have brought?

ZELIMA.

No, Prince! I yet have more to tell.

CALAF.

Out with them.

ZELIMA.

You must have common patience. Turandot
Has sent me here to beg a favor of you.

Let her but know your name, that she may still
 Uphold her reputation, as a maid,
 Not only famed for beauty but for wisdom.
 This but effected, she'll descend her throne
 And welcome you before the whole Divan,
 As her dear lord and husband. Then oblige
 Your destined wife by a kind act, that would
 Raise you still higher in her estimation.
 Ah! you have won this proud one's heart; and what
 Compulsion ne'er effected, love has done.

CALAF (*bitterly.*)

Away! your object's just what I suspected,

ZELIMA.

What's that, my Prince?

CALAF.

Mere womanly deception.

ZELIMA.

You cannot think I tell a falsehood?

CALAF.

Yes,

I can, and do. Begone! I'll hear no more.

Say this from me to your enchanting Mistress.

My sole ambition is to gain her hand;

And mighty love forbids the boon she asks.

ZELIMA.

Reflect, what this caprice may cost your Highness.

CALAF.

Cost it my life, I change not.

ZELIMA.

It will cost

Both that, and the young Princess' love as well.

CALAF.

Losing the *first*, the *last* is quite of course.

ZELIMA.

Is that your feeling Prince?

CALAF.

It would be *hers*.

ZELIMA.

Then you refuse to grant my mistress' prayer?

CALAF.

I do, in all kind courtesy.

ZELIMA.

Farewell! (*aside.*)

I might have spared myself this useless trouble.

How wretchedly I play the hypocrite!

CALAF (*solus.*)

Deceitful woman! all thy craft and cunning

Could not entrap me; but Skirina's tale

Affects me deeply. My loved mother dead!

My father here in Pekin! This indeed

Is startling and afflicting news. All, all

Will shortly be explained. I'the interim

I'll try to sleep. Alas! my dearest mother!

Dead! Dead! and gone! My worn and troubled spirit

Seeks for a little rest; my eyelids droop.

O balmy sleep! I can no more resist

Thy soft embrace.

(*Throws himself on the bed, and sleeps; then enter ADELMA masked, bearing a wax-light. CALAF continues sleeping.*)

(*ADELMA at first does not perceive him.*)

ADELMA.

Still one resource is left.

By every artifice within my means,

Have I essayed to learn his name; all failing,

I will now urge the Prince to fly with me

From Pekin's walls. — O mighty love! support me!

Thy glowing fires are raging in my soul.

(*She observes CALAF sleeping.*)

My loved one sweetly sleeps! Be still my heart!

His gentle slumbers hide those brilliant eyes

Whose flashes have undone me. But the day

Will shortly dawn, I may not linger here.

Awake, awake my Prince!

CALAF.

Who's this disturbs
My rest? some new deceiver? whosoe'er
Thou art, be brief — be speedy I would sleep.

ADELMA.

Nay, be not angry Sir. What fear you?

CALAF.

Nothing.

Why should I fear?

ADELMA.

Indeed you have no cause;
For 'tis no enemy that stands before you.
I do not wish you to disclose your name.

CALAF.

I know your object well — you would betray me.

ADELMA.

Betray you! *I!* I merit your suspicion!
But tell me has Skirina been with you,
Endeavouring by deception to obtain
Your name?

CALAF.

She has.

ADELMA.

Did she succeed?

CALAF.

Oh! no;

I was not weak enough to let her.

ADELMA.

Gods!

I thank ye! — Tell me, came a lady here
Who tried to blind you with an artful message?

CALAF.

Yes, but she went from hence about as *wise*
As *you* shall go. —

ADELMA.

Prince, your suspicion wounds

My pride; 'tis time you knew me better. First
Hear me; and then condemn me, if you please.

CALAF.

What do you want?

ADELMA,

Regard me well.

CALAF.

I do,

ADELMA.

Whom think you that I am?

CALAF.

Your words and carriage
Bespeak you noble; but your garments seem
To note you as a slave; and if I err not,
This very day, in the Divan, I saw,
And deeply pitied you.

ADELMA.

And I, my Prince,
Admired, and prayed most heartily for you. —
'Tis three years since, a favorite of fortune,
I first beheld you in my Father's gardens.
But fourteen summers then my years had told,
And childhood verged on womanhood; yet still,
Even then my heart suggested you were born
To a far more exalted destiny,
And felt for you what, though my tongue confessed not,
My every action but too plainly proved. —
All I could do to lessen your affliction —
To better your degrading state — I did;
And gave you all the favors it became
The daughter of a mighty king to give.

(Unmasking.)

Look on me Sir! and tell me, have you ne'er,
In all your life, beheld this face before?

CALAF.

Adelma! Mighty Fohi! Can it be?
The lovely child, to lovelier woman grown?

ADELMA.

Yes, in the bonds of slavery you see
The daughter of the king of Carazan,
Born to a throne; but now by fate compelled
To fill the office of a wretched slave!

CALAF.

Princess! the world has mourned for you as dead!
In what a miserable state I find you!
A monarch's daughter who should be a Queen,
A slave in a Seraglio! tis indeed
A sad, sad change!

ADELMA.

The cruel Turandot
Has been the wilful cause of my misfortunes.
I had a Brother whom I dearly loved.
He, like yourself, by her accursed beauty
Was captivated. He, like you, attended
In the Divan. — *(She falters overpowered by her tears.)*

But I have said enough.
On Pekin's lofty gate they set his head!
Yes, there you may behold the last remains
Of that loved brother!

CALAF.

Most unfortunate maid!
Report for once spoke truly then. The tale
So long rejected by me as a fable,
Is founded in reality! I pity
And gladly would assist you. But explain
Why you are thus degraded?

ADELMA.

You shall hear.
My father Kircubad, a daring Prince,
Hearing my brother's cruel fate, assembled
His faithful council, and marched forth in arms
With numerous forces, against great Altoum,

To take revenge for the enormity
Committed by that monarch and his daughter.
But *might* alas; ruled right. The king my father,
And my brave brothers fell i'the battle-field.
Myself, my mother, and my sisters dear,
With all partaking of our royal blood,
Were seized, then as State - Prisoners brought to Peking,
And doomed to watery graves; The word was given,
And from the Imperial galley we were hurled
Into the sweeping flood, whose chilling waves
My heart's-blood froze ere sense forsook me!

CALAF.

Ah!

Princess! my heart weeps tears of blood for you.

ADELMA.

Then came the death pangs; then oblivion. Would
That blessing had continued! but stern fate
Reserved me for still greater sufferings.
Ere life was quite extinct, the Emperor,
From some caprice, for which I thank him not,
Ordered his slaves to save me. They obeyed;
And to the shore conveyed me, senseless, pale,
Half-drowned, half-dead, the last of all my race!
They finally revived me, but to say
My life was only spared to be a slave —
The slave of Turandot! Ah royal youth!
If kind humanity e'er touched your soul,
Then must my wretched fate your pity claim.
Think of my anguish — think how mortifying
To serve the stern destroyer of my house!

CALAF.

Adelma, bitterly do I lament
Your deep misfortunes; but methinks for them
You cannot justly blame fair Turandot.
Our eastern customs but too oft compel

Monarchs to slay their prisoners, to appease
 Their subject's anger and revenge. 'Twas thus,
 As fame reports, with great Altoum. An act
 Of mercy would have doubtless caused rebellion,
 And cost him both his life and crown. The Prince,
 Your royal brother, fell the sacrifice
 Of his own venturous daring; and your father
 Courted the overthrow that doomed himself
 And kindred to destruction. As a ball
 Tossed carelessly about by fortune, I,
 At present, am most helpless; but tomorrow,
 Should I but prosper in my suit, Oh! then,
 You shall be free, and formally restored
 Both to your rank and kingdom; at this moment,
 Your misery can scarcely equal mine.

ADELMA.

When I was masked, your Highness still mistrusted;
 But now you know me. Should you gain the Princess,
 Love may be more inviting than compassion,
 And you forget to speak in my behalf.
 Yet would it soothe this suffering heart, if you
 Would hear a fearful truth respecting her.

CALAF.

Speak on; what more would you impart?

ADELMA.

Know then; —

But no, my Prince, you may suspect I came
 But to delude you; and that I possess
 A groveling soul, but suited to a slave!

CALAF.

No longer rack me. — What would'st say of her,
 The Goddess of my thoughts my Turandot?

ADELMA (*asids.*)

Grant heaven my words may move him; (*aloud.*)
 Royal Sir!

Your dear, admired, and matchless Turandot
 So gratefully returns your love, that she
 Would kindly *woo* you with the embrace of death!
 Her Highness positive orders to this end
 Are given; — Yes Prince, 'tis thus your charming Goddess
 Would prove her gratitude!

CALAF.

What! murder me?

Speak to the point.

ADELMA.

Yes, *murder you*, I say.

At sun rise, will you leave this chamber, Sir,
 As if to attend before the grand Divan;
 But ere you reach the scene of rendezvous,
 You will have twenty daggers in your heart!
 Thus has your *gentle Goddess* ordered!

CALAF.

Ha;

I will not fall quite unrevenged. I'll call
 The guard! *(rushes towards the door.)*

ADELMA.

Stay, stay! the act would be
 Insane. What! call your executioners!
 Know, — the same watch that by the Emperor
 Is placed to guard you, are the very men
 Who are suborned by Turandot to slay you!

CALAF.

O Timur! Timur! my unhappy father!
 Thus must thy Calaf perish! — thou art come
 In time to weep upon his tomb!

ADELMA *(aside.)*

What says he?

Calaf! the son of Timur! happy chance!
 Come now what may, should he refuse to fly
 With me, his fate is in my hands.

CALAF.

And so,

I am but placed amid these guards, to be
 Their victim! so, Brigella's words were true!
 And bribery and murder will soon loose
 The bonds which honor should hold sacred! Well!
 Fair Turandot! thou charmer of my soul!
 Even have thy will. Exult, and revel in
 The blood of thy true lover! Life farewell!
 Why should I wish to save thee?

ADELMA.

Though I have
 No tears to spare, I know a way to fly.
 For this have I just gained your guard, and bribed them.
 Our path is open. Follow one who comes
 To save, and set you free. Our guides attend;
 Our coursers wait impatiently. Let's fly
 Far from these hateful walls. The Khan of Berlas
 Is both by ties of blood, and solemn treaties,
 Allied to me; he will with joy receive us,
 And aid me to regain my father's kingdom.
 This you shall share, if you will condescend
 To be the Partner of my flight, and crown.
 There's no time now for maiden-fears, or scruples,
 So I attempt not to disguise the weakness
 Of a fond heart, to love, and thee devoted.

CALAF.

Ten thousand thanks, dear, generous girl! for thy
 Most condescending kindness; but alas!
 Though I appreciate, I may not accept it.

ADELMA.

Do not disdain my overtures. But if
 You do; if you despise my ardent love,
 Surely the fertile lands of Tartary
 Are rich enough in royal monarchs' daughters.
 As fair as Turandot; possessing souls
 Far gentler, nobler, truer. — Can you not
 Choose one of these to be your consort? I

Will learn to mortify my thoughts, and check
 The rising passions that inflame my soul.
 But save yourself, dear youth! O save your life!
 Even while I speak, the hours speed swiftly on,
 The cocks are crowing, and the palace wakes.
 The morning bringing death, is fast approaching.
 Haste, haste, away! or flight will be in vain.

CALAF.

Fair Princess! I can but repeat my thanks,
 Yet utter inability to accept
 Thy noble offer. Would I could restore
 To thee thy liberty, and rightful kingdom!
 But I may not turn rebel to my host,
 And second father, the renowned Altoum.
 What would he say? What think? if I, his guest,
 Protected by his liberal friendship, fled?
 Accompanied by thee, his daughter's slave?
 My heart is not my own. — Even death would be
 Most welcome, coming from my Turandot.
 Fly then without me; fly! and may the Gods
 Watch over and preserve thee! Here will I
 Await my destiny, be it life, or death.
 It is at least consoling to reflect.
 That though I may not *live* with, I may *die*,
 For my loved mistress.

ADELMA.

Oh! thou senseless youth!
 Bethink thee once again — art thou resolved?

CALAF.

I am — to stay, and brave my fate, whate'er
 It be.

ADELMA.

Ungrateful Prince! it is not *love*
 That holds you back. 'Tis *hatred* to myself.
 Alas! you scorn, despise Adelma. Well!
 Scorn on — refuse my offered hand — despise me —

I'll be your servant—any thing, so you
Will only fly with me, and save your life.

CALAF.

Princess! I neither scorn, despise, nor hate you.
You are a lovely maiden, gifted with
Not only personal, but mental charms;
And therefore well might captivate the heart
Of any one who has a heart to spare.
But I, as is but too well known, have none.
I cannot fly; nay, would not, if I could.

ADELMA.

Then stay, and I will still remain a slave;
For without you my freedom were a curse:
And when grim death shall claim us for his prey,
Let's see who'll look him in the face most boldly,
Adieu then Calaf! Timur's son! — Adieu (*ironically*)
Thou unknown Prince! (*Exit.*)

CALAF (*solus.*)

Poor maiden! fare thee well!

Was ever mortal so perplexed as I?
The morning breaks apace; and ere the clock
Shall strike the hour, perchance I bite the dust.
But then, from whom shall I receive my doom?
Even from her whom I have idolized!
From her whom still I worship and adore!
Lo! the bright Sun rides forth, that brings to me
Death and despair, to others light and life.
Yet do I scorn to fly. A royal Prince
Should die as he has lived, with unstained honor.

(*Enter BRIGELLA.*)

BRIGELLA.

The council is assembled Prince — 'tis time
To go to the Divan. Prepare yourself.

CALAF.

Art thou the murderer? Where has't hid thy dagger?

Come, come! be speedy; rob me of a life
Now wholly valueless. — Obey thy orders.

BRIGELLA.

What orders Sir? I know of none, except
To attend your Highness to the grand Divan,
Which is already met.

CALAF.

But well I know that living, I no more
Shall enter it. I feel that death awaits me.

BRIGELLA.

Your Highness knows and feels then, more than I!
Courage my Prince! Why do you talk of dying,
Unless indeed in our young Princess' arms?

(CALAF throws his sword on the ground.)

Lie there, good sword! I'll not defend myself.
If my loved Turandot will have my life,
The blow shall fall on a defenceless head. *(Exeunt.)*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V. — SCENE I.

The hall of the grand Divan.

ALTOUM is pacing up and down the hall, surrounded by his
courtiers Enter BRIGELLA ushering in CALAF, who makes
his obeisance to the Emperor. The Guard accompanies him.

CALAF *(aside.)*

And live I still? At every step methought
Some "twenty daggers would be in my heart;"
Whereas, uninjured, unattacked, and free,
I have reached the hall of the Divan! Adelma
Was false! whom can I trust again?

ALTOUM (*embracing CALAF.*)

My son!

Thy countenance is sad — thy thoughts seem troubled;
 But soon thou'lt reach the goal of thy ambition,
 Soon next ourself take rank and precedence
 In our celestial empire. Courage then!
 News have we for thee that will chase away
 All sorrow from thy heart and make young joy
 On tip-toe dance within it, 'till it beat
 With sympathetic gladness. But we must
 Withhold the cheering detail, until thou
 Thy mistress shal't have bravely won. At length
 She tells us, by her trusty messengers,
 That from all further trial she'll abstain.
 Therefore she waits thy wooing and thy love,
 And will most joyfully accept thy hand.

PANTALON.

She will accept it Sire: how joyfully,
 Is — to be proved. (To CALAF)

Yes, most illustrious Prince!

Imperial Turandot must be your wife;
 For nothing can prevent her; then I offer
 My best congratulations.

CALAF.

Noble friend!

With my best thanks I heartily greet your Lordship

PANTALON

Three times last night the Princess called me to her,
 And in such hurry, that, upon my honor,
 She scarcely gave me time to put my feet
 Within my slippers! I assure your Highness
 It was no child's-play; for while on my way,
 I was half dead with cold! — My very beard
 'Gan bristling as in kindred sympathy
 With my whole body! Then, when I arrived
 In her fair presence, Gods! what maiden fears,

What whims — caprices — had I to contend with!

CALAF.

What might they be? or what resembled they?

PANTALON.

Faith, nothing but *themselves* but you shall hear.

She wished delay; but yet she *would not ask it!*

She loved your Highness, yet she *did not, dared not!*

She'd *ta'en an oath*, and yet she would not say

What, when, or where! Your Highness was the pink

Of all perfection, young, accomplished, wise,

Brave, interesting, elegant, delightful,

The soul of honor, and of gallantry;

With numerous similar *et ceteras*; —

But then again, you were tyrannical,

Proud, overbearing, arrogant, inhuman,

Hard-hearted, base — in short, to sum up all,

A man!

CALAF (*smiling.*)

I must plead guilty to *that* charge.

PANTALON.

But such a man! she added, as must set

Young ladies' hearts a beating — all but her's!

Hers did not beat at all! — and yet — it did;

But not for you! or if perchance for you,

'Twas more forsooth in hatred, than in love!

She ended where she had begun! began

Where she had ended! and, in fact,

Gave evident proofs that she was head and ears

In love with somebody; but then, of course,

Not with your Highness! for you were a man!

TARTAGLIA.

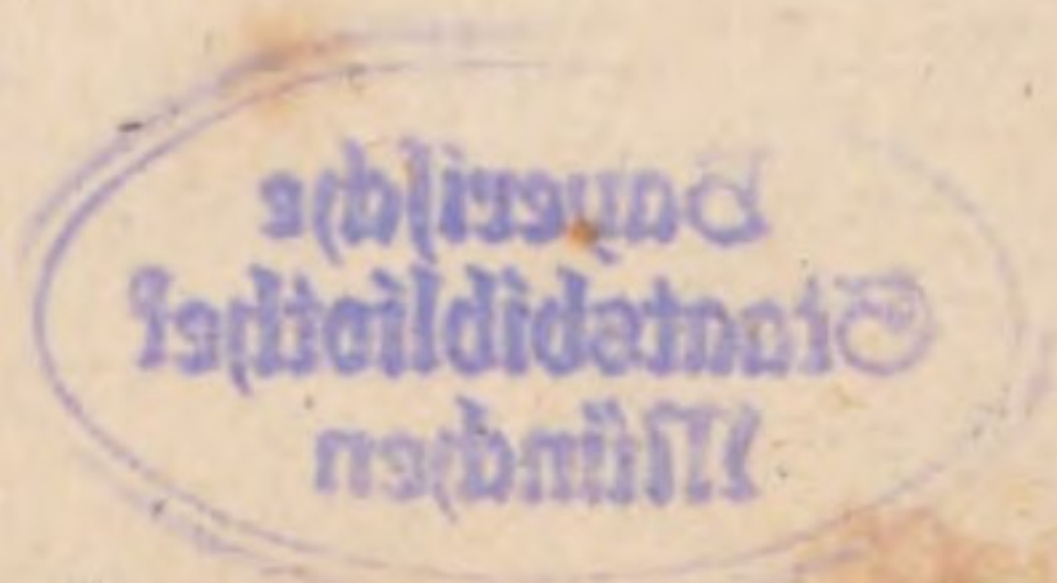
This was provoking, certainly; but nothing

Compared methinks with what I have endured.

At two i'the morning I was called to her.

At first, she would *not* see me then again

She *would*. When brought before her, she commanded



I should declare why I dared trouble her!
 I humbly said 'twas *she* who troubled *me*,
 As I had risen from my bed to see her,
 By her especial orders. — "Well!" quoth she,
 "What then?" I stared! Her Highness thus proceeded.
 "You do not answer! — I will answer for you,"
 And then did she exhibit o'er and o'er,
 The maiden whims, wild fancies, and caprices
 Already mentioned by my noble friend,
 Lord Pantalon; with this especial difference,
 That ever and anon between the acts
 In this strange farce, it pleased her gracious Highness
 To arouse my fears by *gentle* hints that I
 Was likely to be shorter by a head,
 Unless I did impossibilities!

CALAF (*smiling.*)

After what fashion were these hints conveyed?

TARTAGLIA.

With a quick flourish of the hand, that cut
 The air thus, (*motioning with his hand*) *sword-fashion*,
 and meant

"Off goes your head, my lord, unless you do
 "Just so and so." But lest the alarming action
 Should possibly admit of *doubt*, the lady
 Next condescended to explain herself
 In words most *kind* and *rational*; for instance,
 I was ere sun rise either to disclose
 Your Highness' name, or failing this, to prove
 You were *no man*! for then she might endure you.
 If I did not, I knew the penalty!
 Instant decapitation — *that was all*!

And all the while she looked more like a ghost
 Than living maiden. Finally, she gave me
 Fair words, and thanks; and feared I *might imagine*
 Her conduct *rather odd*. "Oh! *by no means*."
 I meekly answered, and then took my leave,

Too happy still to find my head upon
My trembling shoulders!

ALTOUM.

Such absurd caprices
Are but too much in keeping with her past
Most strange and unaccountable conduct; but
At length her reign of tyranny is o'er.
Much honored Prince, and nobles follow us,
And wait her coming in our grand divan.
(*The folding doors are thrown open. ALTOUM, CALAF, the
countiers etc. etc. Exeunt into the grand divan. The doors
close after them.*)

ACT V. — SCENE II.

*The grand divan. ALTOUM is seated on his throne. CALAF is
standing in front of the throne. On each side of it stand
PANTALON and TARTAGLIA. The eight doctors are seated
at their respective desks.*

ALTOUM.

Our positive orders are that Turandot
Should forthwith come to the divan, and yet
She lingers. By the Gods, if gentle words
Will not induce, force speedily shall compel her
To obey us. Then exult my son! at last
Your hour of triumph is arrived.

CALAF.

Alas!

I cannot in my heart exult, if she
Whom that heart worships, should not willingly
Unite her fate to mine. A sense of honor
Should rather urge me to resign the treasure,
Than seize on it by force; but yet my soul

Is not sufficiently exalted, Sire,
 To act a part so generous; for what
 Were life without her? Nothing; and besides,
 As she was ne'er known to prefer another,
 Still do I fondly cling to the bright hope
 That yet my warm and never-failing love
 May touch her maiden-heart. My will shall be
 The slave of all her pleasures; my ambition
 To ensure her happiness; and this shall last
 Long as the fatal sisters parcae spin
 Our destiny: yes, while I live, and breathe,
 Will she be ever in my thoughts and dreams.

ALTOUM.

No more delay then; our Divan to day
 Shall serve for temple. Raise the altar! Let
 The Priests stand ready to perform their office.
 Our daughter, as she enters, shall perceive
 Our will is fixed and resolute. We swear
 By Fohi's head that will shall be obeyed.

(A curtain is raised on the backpart of the stage, where an altar is discovered. Attendant priests are standing ready to perform the nuptial ceremony.)

Ope wide the portals! for the populace
 Shall have free entrance, and bear witness to
 The act of justice which we have decreed.

(A solemn march.)

(Enter TRUFALDIN with his Blacks, followed by the ladies of the harem, TURANDOT, ZELIMA and ADELMA, wearing black dresses and veils.)

PANTALON.

At length they come! — hush! hush! what plaintive music!
 What mournful pomp! tis like a funeral!

(The entry is performed with the like ceremony as in act second.

TURANDOT mounts her throne and addresses CALAF.)

TURANDOT.

The tempest glads the elfin-sprite; the wreck
 Is cheering to the water-fiend. Even so,

This sorrowful procession, unknown Prince!
 Proving too well my sad doom, and affliction,
 Of course is grateful to your eyes. I see
 The altar ready, and the priests prepared
 To do my father's bidding. — I behold
 In that exulting brow, your victory,
 And my dread overthrow. By every art
 That woman could devise, have I essayed
 To avoid the threatened evil; but when fate
 Impels, we must submit.

CALAF.

Could you but read
 The grief that preys on this devoted heart,
 At your affliction, you would know, sweet maid
 How fearfully it checks the impassioned bliss
 The thought of calling you mine own excites.
 So the worn Traveller, to his home returning,
 As he draws near its haunts beloved, rejoices;
 But if perchance a funeral-wail arise,
 He starts and pauses, fears and falters, while
 The joy of his exulting soul is damped,
 And gloomy doubt to fancied certainly
 Of happiness and sunshine fair, succeeds.
 But why thus torture your devoted slave?
 Is it a crime to aim at a bright prize
 The proudest monarch in the world might well
 Delight and glory in possessing?

ALTOUM.

Prince!

She is not worthy your exalted love.
 It now remains for her to solve your question,
 Or yield to you her hand and duteous homage.
 To work then. — Let the instruments send forth
 A crash of triumph; for to answer rightly
 Is quite beyond her power.

(A crash of music.)

TURANDOT.

Much vaunting Prince!
Proud, vain and arrogant! take heed, and quit
The grand divan with all due haste, while yet
Your head is on your shoulders. Be it known,
That having raised your hopes so high I can,
At pleasure dash them to the ground, and *will*.
Yet firstly, I would once again permit,
Nay caution, and entreat you, to retire.

CALAF.

That will I never do. Come fate — come death,
If so the Gods decree. As the firm rock,
Which angry surges lash in vain, so I
Stand unappalled. The billows of thy wrath
May overwhelm: but cannot terrify
Or move me from my purpose.

TURANDOT.

'Tis enough.

Know then, *Prince Calaf*, royal *Timur's* son,
Your name and family could not remain
A secret from my wisdom. But even yet,
I would be merciful; then fly my presence,
Take a new love, and think no more of one,
Who is resolved to live and die a maid.
Wo, wo to all, who shall again aspire
To gain the hand of Turandot!

CALAF.

Ye Gods!

You persecute your victim still! (*to TURANDOT*) Command me
To instant execution; for the son
Of royal Timur, ne'er will condescend
To fly from danger. No, he still aspires
To be your lover, though he be condemned
To torture, and to death.

ALTOUM.

Most wretched parent!

Unhappy Prince! cruel, unnatural daughter!

PANTALON *(to TARTAGLIA.)*

Ah! noble vizier! home, and shave thy beard!

TARTAGLIA.

By Fohi, this most unexpected ill
Bewilders and confounds me

CALAF.

Is all lost?

All hope departed? all appeal in vain?

Alas! it is! self-murdered shall I be!

I lose my love because I loved too well!

I lose my life because. I valued it

Less than her happiness! Why could I not

Content me with the easy victory

Of yesterday? Oh! why did'st thou, kind monarch,

At my insane request, consent to change

The law? and make my life the forfeiture

Of a true answer by thy pitiless child

To my most idle question?

(after a pause.)

But 'tis past!

Her victory's welcome, and her hand is free.

*(Murmurs of disapprobation are heard in the back-ground
from the assembled populace.)*

ALTOUM *(to CALAF.)*

Dear Prince, my feeble age cannot endure

This unexpected blow, it quite unmans me.

(TURANDOT aside to ZELIMA.)

My father's agony distracts my soul.

Prince Calaf too my pity claims, and lo!

The people murmur! What am I to do?

ZELIMA.

Simply *undo* the past, by raising him

Whom you, my Princess, have cast down so low.

ADELMA.

On this dread moment life or death depend.

CALAF.

A sword's not wanting to fulfil the law,

And end a life no longer worth preserving.

(He seizes a dagger lying on a table, and advances to the foot of TURANDOT's throne.)

Yes, unappeased, tyrannic, beautiful girl!

See here the Calaf whom thou hast discovered,

Whom unknown thou alas! didst hate — whom known,

Thou dost abhor. 'Twere but false mercy now

To lengthen my existence, since it is

So worthless in thy eyes. Have then thy will.

No longer shall my hated form offend thee.

Here at thy feet I die.

(He attempts to stab himself. TURANDOT starts from her throne, seizes his arm and prevents him. — ADELMA also rushes forward with a similar intention.)

TURANDOT.

O Calaf! Calaf

ALTOUM.

What can this mean?

CALAF.

Would'st thou prevent my death?

Is this thy mercy? this thy womanly pity?

That I should deign to live deprived of thee?

And do'st thou think then to command despair?

Here ends thy power; for I will disappoint

Thee and thy heads-man, by my own destruction.

Thou shalt not save my wretched life to day,

To swell thy pride and triumph on the morrow,

With the *spectacle* of my execution.

Depart and leave me to my fate — yet if

One spark of pity animate thy breast,

Then shew it to my royal father: he

Is now in Pekin, and will need it much,

When you shall tell the poor, bereaved old man,

That death has robbed him of his only son.

(He is again about to stab himself; but TURANDOT again prevents him.)

TURANDOT.

Live, Calaf, live! but not for me! an oath

Long registered on high, prevents our union.
 Further than this I may not now disclose.
 I do confess I love thee, more, by far,
 Than it becomes a virgin to admit;
 But this confession owe I now to truth,
 To thee, my Imperial father, and myself;
 Yet am I doomed a maiden to remain,
 'Till death release me from my misery.

*(ALTOUM and CALAF seem lost in astonishment, when suddenly
 an old man rushes forward, hastily makes his obeisance,
 and addresses TURANDOT.)*

OLD MAN.

Say rather Princess! 'till a long-lost friend
 Release you from the *fancied* penalty
 Attaching to your oath.

TURANDOT.

What miracle
 Is this? Has Ocean-given up its dead?
 Do I behold my once respected tutor,
 The learned sage Dinarbus?

OLD MAN.

'Tis the same.

ALTOUM.

Our worthy late ambassador! The dead
 Alive again! This startling mystery
 Is gratifying, as wonderful.

DINARBUS.

My liege!

In a few words I can explain it. By
 A lucky chance, particulars of which
 May best be told hereafter, I have just
 Escaped from slavery among a band
 Of Pirates, who attacked the Imperial bark
 That bore me on my embassy, and with
 Inferior forces overwhelming me
 And all my suite, led the surviving few
 Into captivity.

ALTOUM.

We from our heart
 Rejoice, thou venerable man, to see thee
 Again restored to us, and to thy country.
 How oft we grieved for thy supposed death!
 But what new wonder canst thou yet unfold
 To absolve our dearest daughter from an oath
 Which 'till this moment we ne'er knew of? save
 That once she hinted at such circumstance;
 But instantly again denied it.

DINARBUS.

Sire!

Soon will I satisfy your majesty.
 My honored pupil, Turandot, commanded,
 With threats, and tears, and prayers, that I should write
 On parchment, a rash vow she'd lately made
 Never to marry living mortal! What
 Could I, her slave of slaves, dare do, but write
 As ordered? This I did reluctantly.
 No sooner was my task performed, than lo!
 It pleased her Highness further to require;
 To wit, that I should instantly indite,
 And then administer to her, an oath
 Strictly to keep her vow.

TURANDOT.

Too true: thou didn't
 Such oath indite, and then administer;
 So am I doomed to endless misery.

DINARBUS (*to TURANDOT.*)

Have but a little patience, and you'll find
 The case far otherwise. — When all my prayers
 Were ineffectual to dissuade you from
 Your purpose, doubtless you remember well
 I craved ten minutes to prepare the oath?

TURANDOT.

I do.

DINARBUS.

And these your Highness granted me?

TURANDOT.

I did.

DINARBUS.

Half only of the time permitted,
Did I devote to drawing up the oath;
The other half far better was employed.

TURANDOT.

How? How? my soul is on the rack!

DINARBUS.

In adding

A *saving clause* to your too hasty vow,
Then yet unsigned, which was to this effect; —
That notwithstanding the aforesaid vow,
If you should chance to lose your heart thereafter,
To some young Prince deserving of your love,
Such vow, to all intents and purposes,
Should instantly become a mere dead letter,
Quite null and void, and of no effect whatever.
Here is the document, signed by yourself,
In ignorance of that saving-clause. You swore
By Fohi's head you would fulfil the vow,
With *every clause* that appertained thereto;
Then keep your oath! fulfil the *saving-clause*;
See here it is.

(Presenting the paper to TURANDOT, who reads it.)

TURANDOT.

Oh! blessed, blessed friend!

Worthy and wise Dinarbus! thou hast saved
Thy pupil from the abyss of fell despair.

DINARBUS.

Happy do I esteem myself in thus
Obtaining credit with my master's child,
For my just motives; but permit me now
To address myself to this august divan.

(Turning towards the Emperor and his council.)

But two days after my young mistress signed
 The documents in question, my dread sovereign,
 Upon a sudden and most unforeseen
 Emergency, was pleased to send me on
 My late important embassy, the which,
 Had fortune and fair breezes favoured me,
 Might in a fortnight have been happily ended;
 Whereas, four years and upwards have I been
 Detained in wretched slavery; meantime,
 As I just learned with horror and dismay,
 Those frightful scenes took place, which tarnished o'er
 The fair fame of our most illustrious Princess;
 Who, rather than her fancied oath infringe,
 Prevailed upon his majesty to pass
 The edict which we all deplore!

ALTOUM.

Dinarbus,

Thou meritest and hast our gratitude.

TURANDOT (*to ZELIMA.*)

Free, free my captives, Zelima; you know
 My meaning.

ZELIMA.

Oh! how joyfully!

(*Exit ZELIMA.*)

ADELMA (*aside.*)

'Tis time

To die, hope's gone!

CALAF.

Unutterable bliss!

Do I not dream? (*to DINARBUS*) Thy innocent deception
 Has saved thy country, and thy master's house.

DINARBUS.

To the just Gods be all the praise. I am
 Only their humble instrument.

TURANDOT (*to CALAF.*)

I wish

No other glory, dearest Prince, than what
 May emanate from you alone. Then know,
 And also know the world at large, 'twas not
My wisdom that enabled me to unfold
 Your, and your royal Sire's illustrious names.
 You told them both to my young slave Adelma,
 And she to me. Then you have conquered Sir;
 And you shall have the fruits of victory.
 Think not that justice only urges me
 Thus to declare. My heart was all your own,
 Even from the moment when I first beheld you;
 And nothing but my oath prevented me
 From laying my pride and person at your feet.

ADELMA (*aside.*)

O anguish indescribable!

(*CALAF clasps the Princess in his arms.*)

You're mine!

And what is more, deserving of my love.
 Ah! kill me not, excess of happiness.

ALTOUM (*to TURANDOT.*)

Now do I know thee, O my child, as one,
 'Tis true, perverting strangely thy good sense,
 But still proceeding on just principles
 Of moral right and wrong. — The "*tigress-hearted,*"
 Proves thus, at last an upright, innocent maid
 Who would have gladly sacrificed herself
 To save the life of each unhappy Prince
 Who died for her; but that she deemed her oath
 And blessed religion paramount to all. —
 The Gods, who know the heart judge ever by
 Intention whether good or bad the act
 Itself, that follows it. Heaven bless our child!
 For she has made our aged heart rejoice.
 This happy moment heals all former wounds.

PANTALON.

It does, my liege! — Make room, most learned doctors!

Room, room! for now their hands must be united.

(ADELMA to CALAF.)

Then live thou cruel youth! and live thou happy
With her my soul abhors detests. —

(To TURANDOT.)

Yes, know

That I have never loved, but hated thee.
What I have done for thee, was done in malice.
The names I told thee, not without an object.
By this I hoped to win Prince Calaf's love,
And fly with him, whom I knew long before
Thy basilisk-eyes glared on him, to strange lands,
Where at the least I might be free. Last night,
When I appeared to do thee zealous service,
And sought his chamber all was for myself.
Nor prayers nor threats I spared to urge his flight
With me from thy dread power; but all in vain!
When he disclosed his name, I told it thee
That though mightst vanquish and the Prince escape,
With me to my loved native land; but vain
Was every hope! he loved thee but too well;
He'd rather die for thee, than live with me.

PANTALON

Poor Girl! indeed I pity thee.

ADELMA.

Presume not

To pity one so far above thy station.

(To TURANDOT.)

There's one thing yet within my power why should.
A Princess of right royal blood descended,
Endure this long and painful slavery?
In thee my bitterest enemy I view.
Thou'st robbed me of my father, mother, brothers,
Sisters! and all most near and dear to me!
And now too thou wouldst rob me of my love!
Thou shalt not kill the last of all my race.

No, that shall be my office. I will die
By my own hand and rob thee in my turn,
At least of one poor victim.

(She raises the dagger which CALAF has let fall, to stab herself and thus addresses it.)

Thou shalt end
My sorrows; thou shalt find a willing bosom
To embrace thy point and feed thy glittering blade,
Even as the dying pelican her young,
With its best blood.

(She is about to stab herself; but CALAF prevents her.)

CALAF.

Stop, fair Adelma, stop!

ADELMA.

Leave me thou heartless ingrate! thinkest thou
I'll live to witness thy approaching nuptials?
And meanly hold the golden cup from which
Thy Turandot will pledge thee? and which thou,
In gallantry and kind return wilt drain
In honor of her beauty? No, young Sir,
Adelma has a soul too high.

CALAF.

Dear maid!

You must not die. 'Tis well that you betrayed me;
Since by this means fair Turandot, without
Constraint or force, is now become mine own.

(To ALTOUM.)

Good monarch! if my prayers find favor with you,
Give to this hapless Princess instant pardon;
So be the first pledge of my union happy.

TURANDOT.

And I, dear Father, join my prayers with his.
Adelma cannot love but needs must hate me.
She never can forgive me Sir, and thinks
I ne'er can pardon her; though from my heart,
I do. Enough of tear-drops has she shed.
We should be generous — we should be just.

ALTOUM.

On such a happy day, whate'er thou askest,
 That shal't thou have; therefore I now restore
 To her not liberty alone; for by great Fohi,
 Her father's kingdom shall be her's again.
 May she soon marry with some worthy Prince,
 Deserving her distinguished worth and beauty!
 And rule with him in justice' name! may he
 Bravely defend her throne! — Then hail! all hail!
 Royal Adelma! Queen of Samarcand!

CALAF, TURANDOT etc.

All hail Adelma! Samarcand's young Queen!

ADELMA.

Sire! Princess! Prince! I am abashed, confused,
 And all unworthy of this lenity.
 Time, that should heal all wounds, may staunch my own;
 Yet must I hasten from your presence now.
 My tears gush forth, and will not be restrained,

ALTOUM.

Then if it please your majesty, retire
 Awhile; and peace and happiness attend you!

(To the attendants)

A train of slaves to wait upon *the Queen!*

(ADELMA is handed to the door by CALAF, who kneels at the threshold, and respectfully kisses her hand. She then retires followed by slaves and attendants.)

CALAF.

My father! where where art thou? how I long
 To vent my joy upon thy bosom!

TURANDOT.

Prince!

Thy illustrious Sire has been my inmate: he
 'Ere this has learned thy fortune and his own.
 At present, love, pray seek not more to know.

ALTOUM.

Timur with thee dear daughter! joy, my Son!
 We will receive him with all love and honor.

*

Dame fortune seldom woos us single-handed.
 Not only China's Empire hast thou gained,
 But thy loved country is thine own again!
 The tyrant who despoiled thy father of it,
 Is smitten by the icy hand of death;
 The people call King Timur * to the throne.
 One of his faithful subjects, who has sought
 Him and thyself these tidings to relate,
 Has just to us imparted them. Behold!
 This letter proves it all.

CALAF (*glancing his eye over the letter.*)

Ye righteous Gods!

My happiness is perfect — far too great
 For utterance. (*To TURANDOT*) Come, lean on me, my love!
 Let's to the holy altar; after which,
 I will present thee to my royal parent. —
 How doubly happy will he be to find
 His only son! — his daughter! but he comes!
 Yes, it is he himself. My King! my Father!

(*At this moment enter TIMUR, followed by BARAK, SKIRINA and ZELIMA. TIMUR falls on CALAF's neck. They tenderly embrace. BARAK kneels at CALAF's feet, while SKIRINA and ZELIMA are welcomed by TURANDOT. In the midst of this scene, the curtain falls.*)

THE END.

* NOTE. In the original: Prince Calaf.



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